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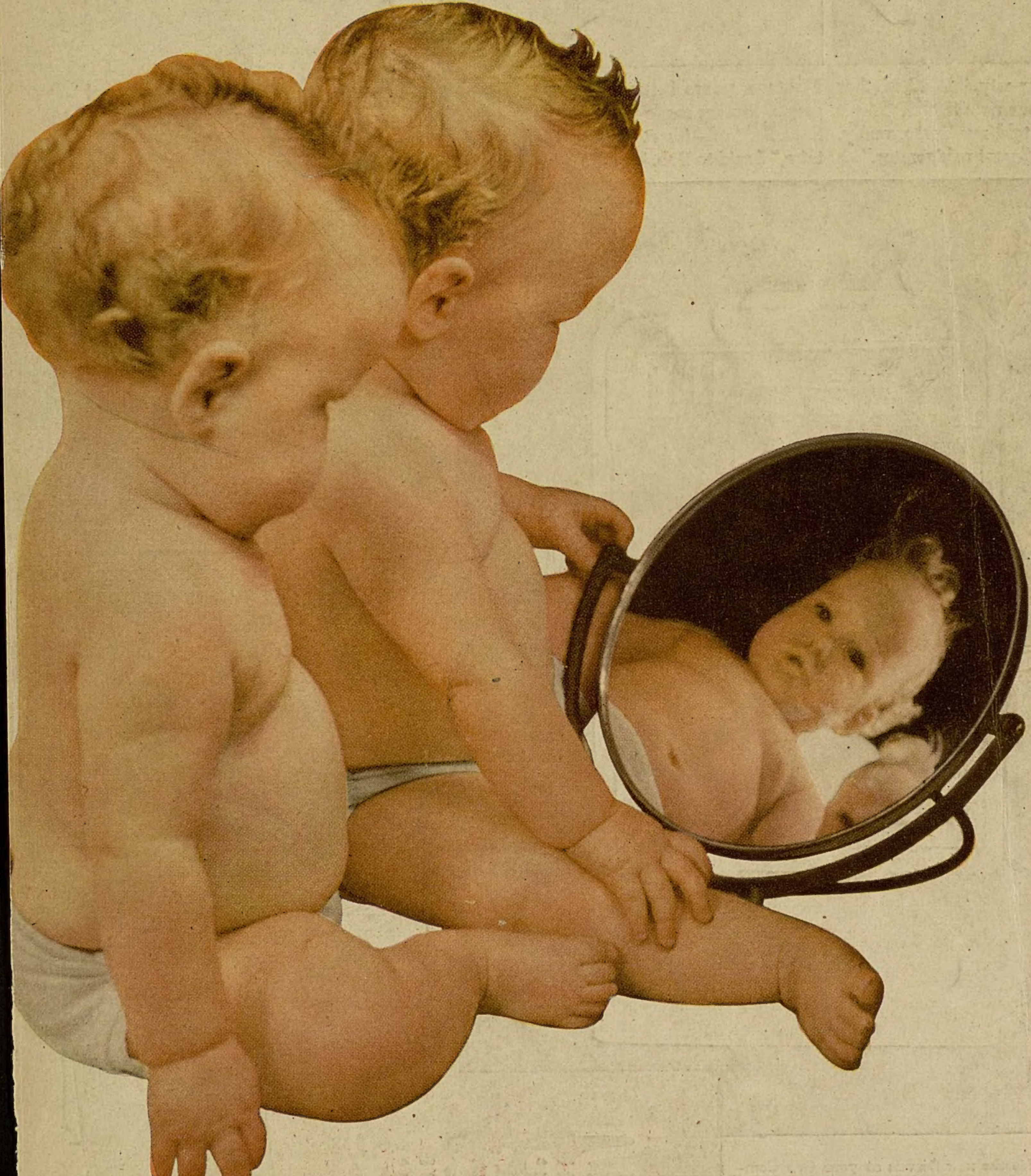

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(no moving parts in the freezing system)

At my sixth birthday party, in 1930, Mother made ice cream in our new Servel. *"Can't ever get noisy,"* she told my Dad proudly. "Servel is the one *different* refrigerator."

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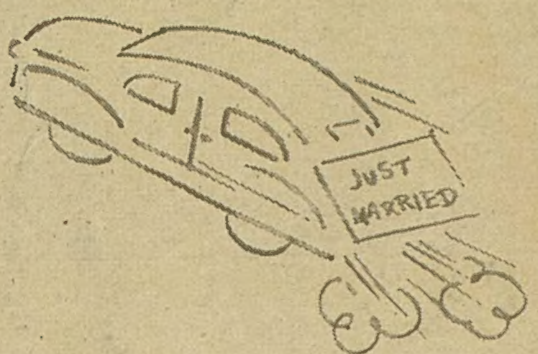

Yes—it was a beautiful new Servel for our kitchen when we fixed up the old house we bought after our wedding. For only Servel stays silent, lasts longer. The secret? Only Servel has no moving parts in its freezing system. No motor or machinery. Just a tiny gas flame does the work.

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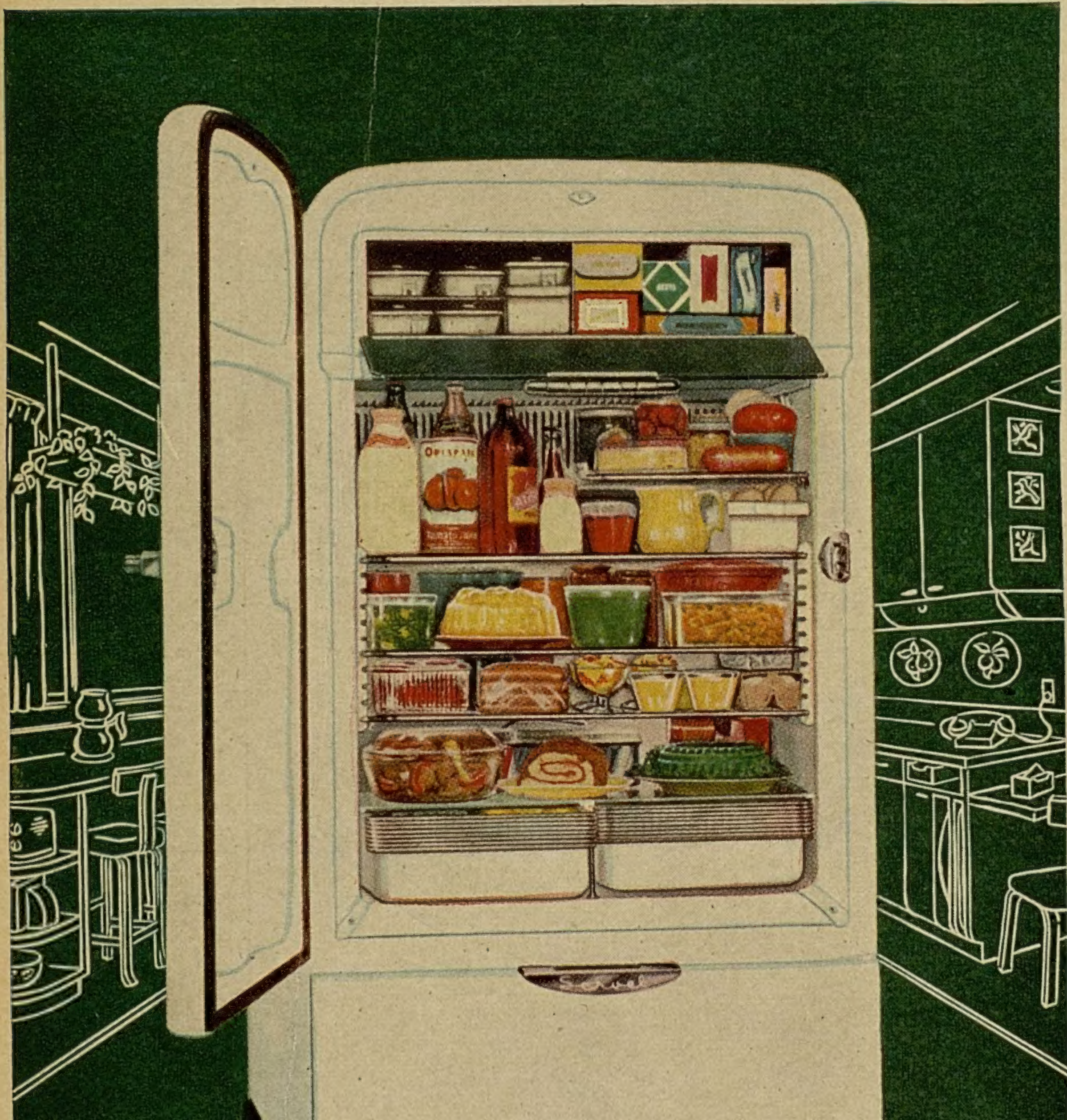

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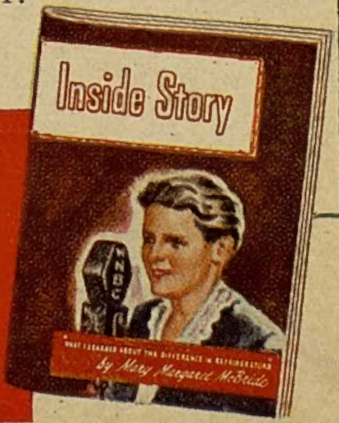

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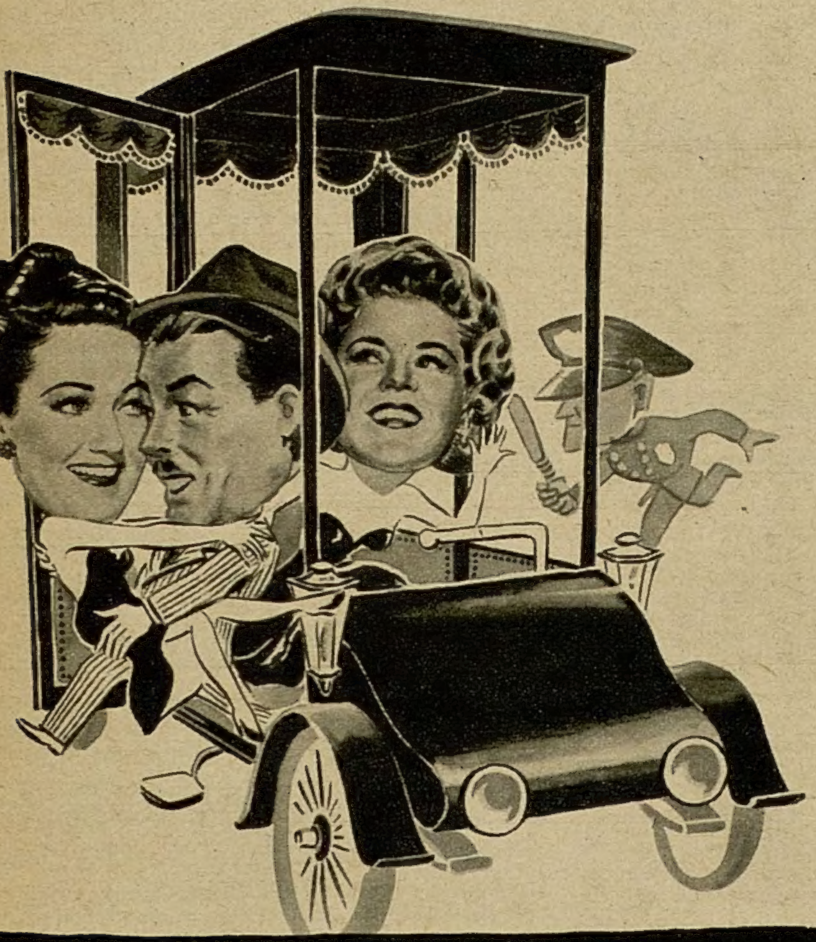

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TWO OF A KIND
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- Stopped-up Drains
- Stopped-up Sewer Pipes
- Chemical Drain
- Plumbing Traps Cleaners
- Noisy Plumbing
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- Thawing Frozen Pipes
- Water Softening Equipment
- Repairing Faucets, Flush Tanks, Leaky Pipes, etc.

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- Types of Paint
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- Calcimine
- Paint Thinners
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- Removing Paint
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- Building Materials
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- Roofing Materials—Asphalt, Asbestos, Aluminium, Wood Shingles
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EXTERIOR REPAIRS
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- Waterproofing Masonry Walls
- Repairing Cracks in Foundation, Stucco Walls
- Repairing Brick Walls
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- Caulking Seams
- Gutters and Downspouts
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- Upholstery of Chairs, Sofas, etc.
- Repairing Worn Springs
- Strengthening Frame
- Furniture Upkeep, Cleaning, Removing Water Stains, Marks Scratches, etc.
- Loose Joints
- Broken Chairs
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- Fixing Loose Tiles
- Mending China, Metal Utensils
- Repairing Door Locks, Hinges
- Fire Fighting Equipment
- Basement into Game Room
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- Repairing Sticking Doors
- How to Cut Glass
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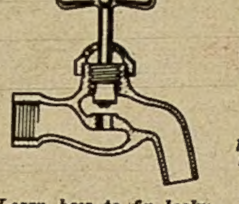

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(Above) A simple little trick like knotting the wire inside extension plugs can save you severe burns, blowout fuses and fire hazards.

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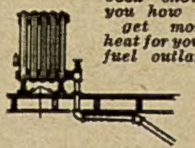

YOUR GARDEN
- Building Garden Paths
- Building Garden Pool
- Care of Garden Tools
- Cold Frames
- Rustic Screens, Arches
- Building an Outdoor Fireplace
- Erecting Garage, Summer Guest House or Play House in Garden, etc.

YOUR TOOL KIT
- Equipping Workshop
- Selecting the Right Tools
- Correct Use of Tools
- How to Sharpen Tools
- Sandpapers, Glues, etc.
- Soldering Equipment and Technique

HEATING THE HOUSE
- Chimneys
- Coal Furnaces, Oil Burners
- Automatic Draft Regulators
- Thermostats
- Warm Air Heating Systems
- Steam Heating Systems
- Cleaning, Adjusting Radiators
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Liberty WASHINGTON

BY STACY V. JONES

YOUR TOWN'S FUTURE Is your community tired and run down? Does it have economic spots before the eyes? If so, both federal and state agencies can suggest remedies, although usually there's no easy cure.

In this country, planning starts at the grass roots, because Americans don't like to be told what to do. So the Area Development Division of the Department of Commerce, set up two years ago to supply data on the subject, doesn't volunteer advice but waits to be asked. Usually it works through a local development and planning commission. Thirty-nine of the 48 states have formed such bodies under one name or another.

The old booster philosophy was to attract any factory or business that would bring a payroll, but the modern idea is to invite those the city needs.

A New England coastal area has a big tourist business in the summer, but in the winter things are pretty flat. What should it do, the Area Development Division was asked, to level things off? The ice-cream business there naturally has a summer peak. Study is being given to candy manufacture as one means of taking up the labor slack in the winter.

Mining and lumbering areas need to look around when their richest ore and best timber give out. One such is the "copper country" of Michigan, where 37 communities founded the Upper Peninsula Development Bureau at Marquette, and worked out new business plans with the Michigan Department of Economic Development at Lansing and the Area Development Division at Washington.

Answers to many questions may be found in Basic Industrial Location Factors (25 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D. C.), which charts the things industrialists look for in new sites.

PRINTS You may want to fill that blank wall space over the piano with a print from the National Gallery of Art. Probably you know what you want, but if you are stumped by a problem in the style of your furniture or the tint of your wallpaper, perhaps the gallery can suggest a choice. And whatever you get, the neighbors can't convict you of bad taste.

Copies of old masters and moderns from the gallery's collections, made with great attention to faithful color reproduction, come in various sizes, framed or unframed.

The investment needn't be large. Single copies of the 11-by-14-inch reproductions in four-color halftone are 25 cents each plus postage. Some subjects in this size are offered framed, at five dollars. Larger pictures, made by collotype, cost from $7.50 to $20 unframed, and from $16 to $37 framed.

Since it was opened in 1941, the gallery has distributed 800,000 of the 11-by-14-inch prints. It also does a vast business in post cards, having sold 2,500,000 of the monotone (one-color) variety, which show paintings, etchings, engravings, woodcuts, and sculpture; and 1,300,000 in color, mostly of paintings. The monotones are three for a nickel and the colored cards five cents each; in larger quantities they're much cheaper. Gallery publications include a number of catalogues and handbooks which are really handsome picture books.

You can see sample prints at the gallery—which is, of course, a must on your next visit to Washington—or deal by mail. For lists giving subjects and prices, address Publications Fund, National Gallery of Art, Washington 25, D. C., specifying whether you are interested in small color reproductions, large collotypes, monotone cards, colored cards, or publications.

NEIGHBORHOOD MAPS Chances are you can buy for 20 cents a detailed map of your favorite hunting, fishing, or camping grounds, showing elevations as well as the usual two-dimensional features. If you live in the country or suburbs, you may be able to get one showing your own house.

The Geological Survey has finished 5,000 standard topographic quadrangle maps of this sort, which cover about half the country. They are valuable to sportsmen, engineers, surveyors, miners, oil and gas men, FM broadcasters, realtors—and, of course, Boy Scouts. The sheets are a handy uniform size, 16½ by 20 inches, but the scale varies. Most of them cover an area of about 14 by 16 miles, but the later ones take in roughly six by eight miles. The newest give up-to-date road and highway information. In some quadrangles, surveyed as early as 1880, the mountains and rivers haven't changed, but the roads have. In certain states you also have a choice of large-scale army maps, of which 3,000 have been turned over to the Survey for distribution.

First write the Director, U. S. Geological Survey, Washington 25, D. C., for a free index of the maps made for your state. If it shows a sheet for your neck of the woods, you can order that by mail or buy it locally from one of the agents named on the back. If no map is indexed for your area, ask the Geological Survey whether some other government agency has made one. And be specific both as to area and purpose; one map may be fine for a girl's canoe trip but no good for uranium prospecting.

The Geological Survey has hundreds of special-purpose maps and charts, useful to teachers, business men, and scientists. A free 32-page information booklet describes them.

GENUINE INDIAN ART Navajo silver and turquoise jewelry and rugs are available once more. During the war, output dropped almost to zero, as the Indian craftsmen went into the armed services and war plants; furthermore, silver was allocated.

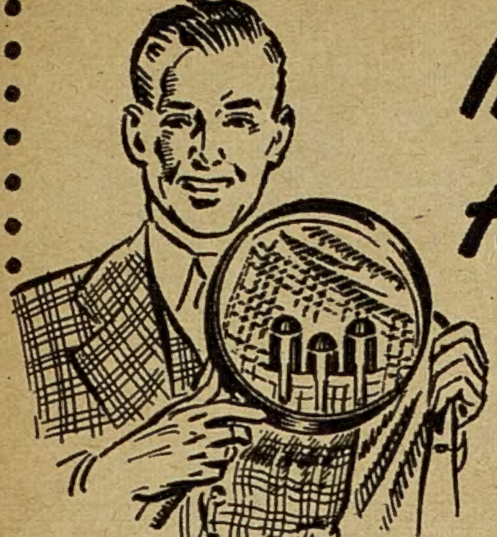
Americans spent about $10,000,000 for handmade Indian goods in 1948, and probably a fourth of that went for Navajo jewelry—squash-blossom necklaces, conch belts, bracelets, earrings, finger rings, pins, brooches, and buttons, plain or set with stones.

Other popular Indian products are Alaskan ivory and wood carvings; Eskimo skin garments (heavily bought by the army and navy during the war); moccasins and leather jackets from Montana, the Dakotas and Wyoming; hand-woven woolens from eastern Oklahoma, and baskets made on many reservations.

Distribution is handled by tribal organizations, traders, and art shops. The Indian Arts and Crafts Board, a federal agency, encourages the business and tries to protect both the Indian and the public, but doesn't buy or sell. It is prohibited by law from dealing with Lo the Poor Indian. Genuine Navajo rugs should have a government certificate attached. Jewelry marked "U. S. Navajo" or "U. S. Hopi" is genuine, but much real jewelry isn't stamped. The best protection, says the board, is to deal direct with a native agency or with a reliable art store. The salesman should know the name of the tribe and the name of the craftsman; if he doesn't, be careful. Some good "Navajo" jewelry is being made in city factories.

The Navajo Arts and Crafts Guild, Window Rock, Arizona, operated by the Navajo tribe, will send you information on jewelry and rugs. The latter range in price from $5 to $400; good ones can be bought between $35 and $100. Some Indian costumes styled for modern wear are being produced by the Southern Plains Indian Arts and Crafts Center, Anadarko, Oklahoma, and sold through department stores. For a list of native-owned sales outlets, write Indian Office, Interior Department, Washington 25, D. C. The Indian Office also has four booklets (single copies free) respectively on Navajo rugs, Indian silver jewelry, baskets, and Pueblo pottery. ◆◆

The Most Amazing Factory-To-You Introductory Offer Ever Made to Liberty Magazine Readers



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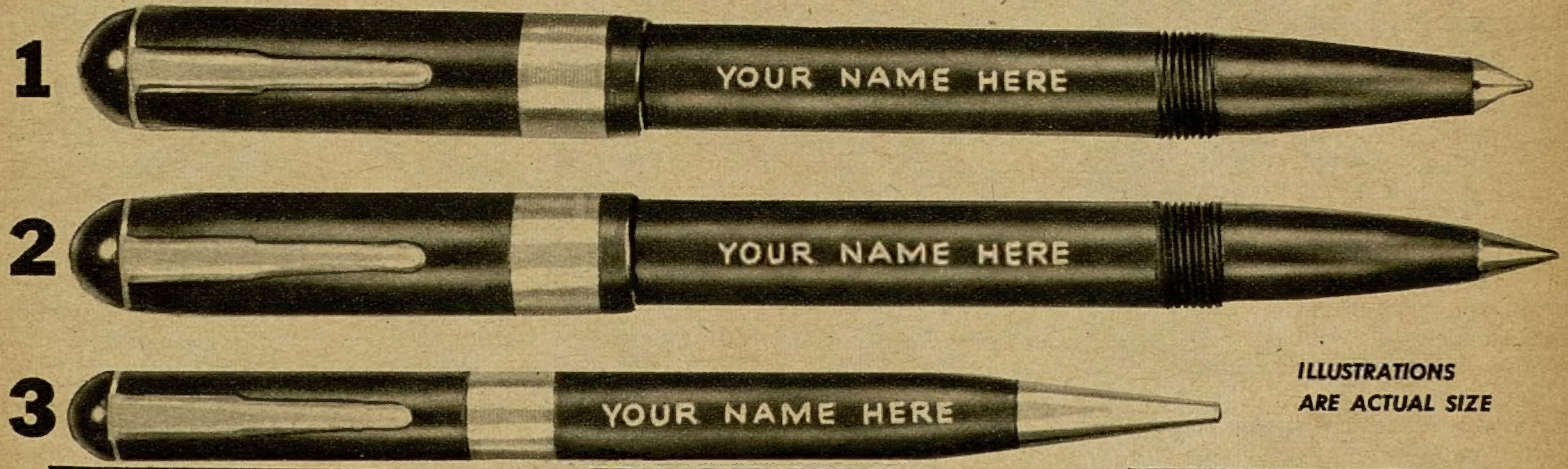

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(Print plainly . . . Avoid mistakes)

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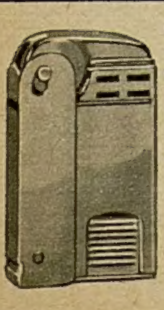

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Liberty

COCKEYED CROSSWORD

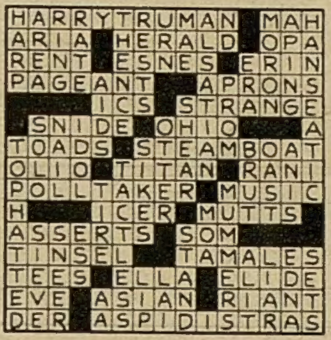
By TED SHANE

HORIZONTAL

1 Root de toot
5 Automattie, the Bendix motorwoman
13 Raise the Ram (Shananagram)
15 Flighty part of old Ernest
16 Bullbutter
17 What Big Business men are perpetually in
19 Art of the screwball
20 He was celibated for his asceticism
21 His mobile end took America places
23 Coal juice
24 Mr. One
26 Sevens' pals
28 Escape mechanism
31 Manuf't'er of the white wine of life
33 World's biggest giveaway program (abbr.)
34 Verb
35 They're yelling for her in the swamps
37 Aw, c'm'on in!
41 What women players play side saddle
43 This knows watt's watt (abbr.)
44 Lost in the mental thicket
45 Beauteous K-k-k-kuties
46 None but the Braves deserve Pee-wee
48 Deviled shrimp
49 Stoked the personal furnaces
51 What Gross is most interested in
52 Marc my word—Julius'll never Caesar!
53 Screwballs
57 Freshman who just removed his cap
59 "Get out and ——!" cried the Flyer
60 What monkeys and dopes learn by
62 They stand on the table every Sunday and are attacked by Father, the old cut-up
65 Teased
67 Careful! Look for concealed microfilm when eating! (two words)
69 What you are if you think it
70 Slash the script
71 Has that rhythm, O Mr. Shelley!
72 Ocean greyhound riders
73 Big times

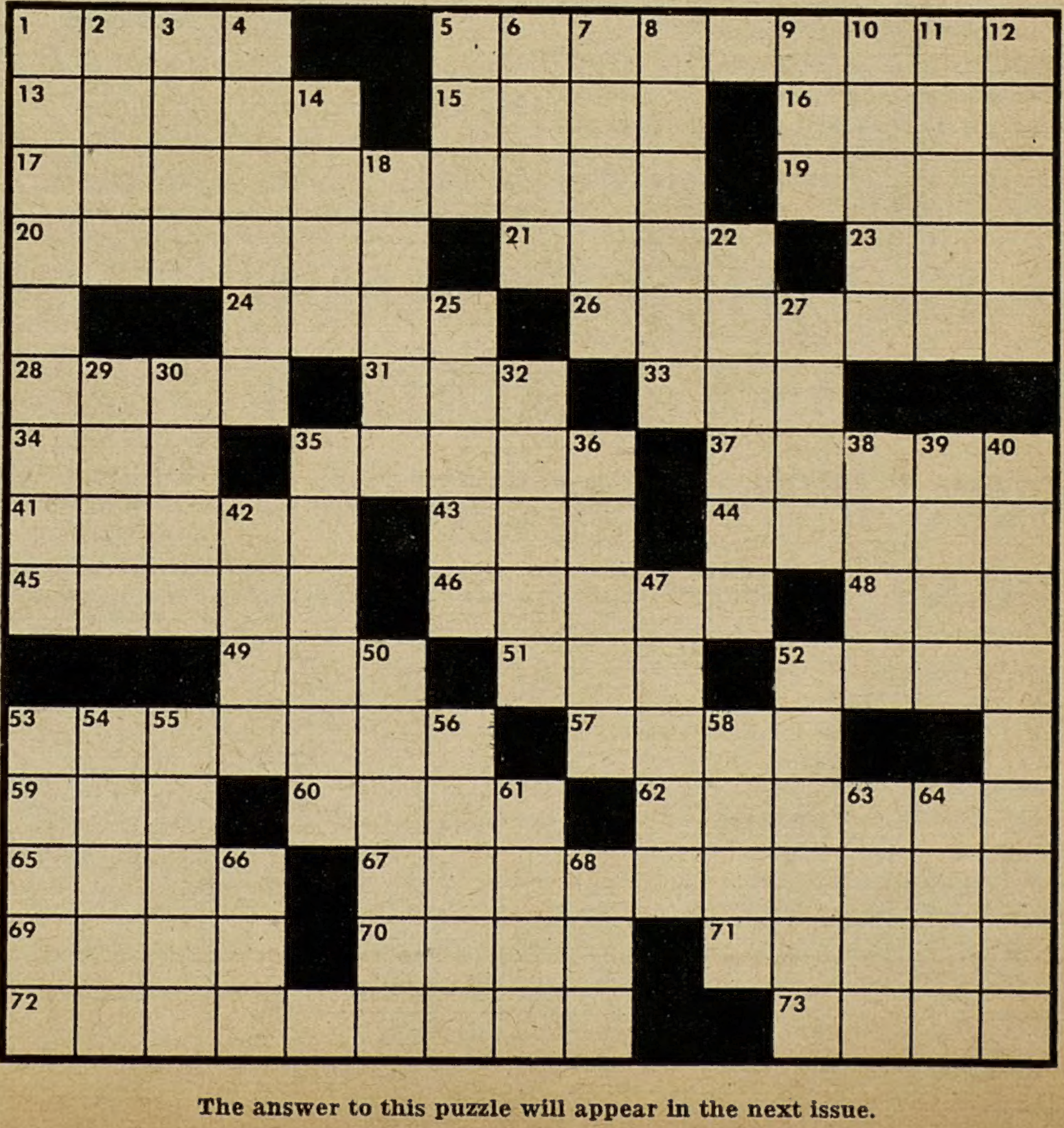
VERTICAL

1 Roulette wheel with fertilizer
2 Every time he aims at a dame, he Mrs. her
3 Vun for der Heinies
4 What Dewey snatched from the jaws of victory
5 He-all gave-all Grant-all a-all heck-all of-all a-all time-all
6 Il Mississippio Italia
7 Aunt in paunt(s)
8 This usually feels sew-sew (sharp, eh?)
9 It has about 16 feet and goes boom
10 Inflate with joy juice
11 America's rolling home
12 Goes with the wind
14 Blow the lightheaded out of the world
18 The man who has the longest at the boardinghouse is best fed
22 What the Dixiecrats were voted Most Likely To
25 Meat chopper
27 It Goes with the Wind
29 What Mary Margaret McBride covers a lot of
30 Hat stuff
32 People with big biases—bias this, bias that!
35 Be equals on the marquee
36 Peeg steeckaires
38 Tahw nem ni eulb stius tcelloc
39 Frightfully British nime!
40 What they'll do to the crate if you don't keep ahead of the Simon Legree Finance Corp.
42 His girls were ungrateful hussies
47 After her twelfth, they say she went this mad
50 He took it on the lam with Mom's little lamb
52 Fate-heads leave things to this
53 Burnie-burnies
54 Q.E.D. it
55 The Browns of the International League play here
56 Undergrad at Ale University
58 Small French pps
61 Chief gobbler of old Turkey
63 Wave the meathooks at the advancing boxer
64 Gal's nickname
66 Imp, as in shrimp
68 Offspring of big milk bottles (abbr.)



HARRYTRUMAN■MAH
ARIA■HERALD■OPA
RENT■ESNES■ERIN
PAGEANT■■APRONS
■■■■ICS■STRANGE
■SNIDE■OHIO■■■A
TOADS■STEAMBOAT
OLIO■TITAN■RANI
POLLTAKER■MUSIC
H■■■ICER■MUTTS■
ASSERTS■SOM■■■■
TINSEL■■TAMALES
TEES■ELLA■ELIDE
EVE■ASIAN■RIANT
DER■ASPIDISTRAS

February Answer



The answer to this puzzle will appear in the next issue.

Liberty SHORT CUTS TO BETTER LIVING

EDITED BY NANETTE KUTNER

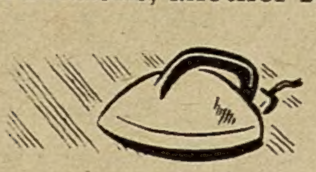
◆ Next time you want to make a hit with your favorite restaurant manager, tell him about this Short Cut invented by Sherman Billingsley, genial boss of New York's popular Stork Club.

Said Mr. Billingsley, "Several years ago I requested the uniform tailor to add a strap to the front side of the waiters' jackets. This was done for the purpose of keeping each waiter's serving napkin clean and on his person. Waiters tend to carry the napkin under the arm, which is unsanitary; or across the arm, which is careless, resulting in a lost napkin plus time while the waiter returns to the linen counter for a fresh one."

By mail a Short Cut comes from the wife of Wardell Pomeroy, who, with Clyde Martin, co-authored the famous Kinsey Report.

EASY-TO-IRON COVER

Ironing a slip cover had been a terrific task for me until I made it in sections that can be snapped together. There is the back section, the arm sections, another section to go under the cushions and down the front. If made in this fashion, any piece may be removed for separate laundering.—*Mrs. Wardell Pomeroy, Bloomington, Ind.*



FOGGY CAR WINDOWS

When the car windows fog up inside, they can be quickly cleaned if one keeps a spare windshield wiper in the glove compartment. A stroke with the wiper removes condensation. — *Carlton Staples, Oak Bluffs, Mass.*

FAT OFF SOUPS

To take fat from the top of soups, drop in a few ice cubes. The grease sticks to the ice, and the cubes are easily lifted out with a spoon.—*Margret Anderson, Kane, Pa.*

RUBBER-GIRDLE MENDER

Should your fingernail accidentally rip through that rubber girdle, cut a cross-shaped piece of moleskin (the kind used by chiropodists; I used Dr. Scholl's) and place over hole. Press hard; don't wear for fully an hour, and the moleskin patch will last for months. It does not adhere to the body.—*Mignon Rounds, San Diego, Calif.*

FOR SMALL NAILS

When wielding a hammer, I find an eyebrow tweezer helpful in holding small nails, also in placing small screws and bolts in tight corners.—*Mrs. Steve Kiemel, Berwyn, Ill.*

PROTECTING BANDAGES

I had to keep my sore foot constantly covered with wet bandages. I placed the entire bandaged foot in a plastic bag (the type my wife buys for vegetables). Not only did my shoeless foot stay clean, but the protected bandages stayed wet.—*George Beach, Fairfax, Va.*

INKSTAIN REMOVER

I'm a hotel housekeeper. When our guests spill ink on rugs, if the stain is still damp, we successfully remove it with vinegar. — *Mrs. E. Schmidt, New York, N. Y.*

WELCOME GIFT

On a child's birthday card, tape a dime for each year.—*Margaret Strong, Chadron, Neb.*

NO SCORCHED POT

Four marbles in the bottom of a double boiler warn when water gets low. They rattle.—*William Flaherty, Grosse Pointe, Mich.*

For each Short Cut published, Liberty will pay $15. Short Cuts must be from your own experience or observation, and the source given. Address contributions to Short Cut Editor, Liberty Magazine, 37 West 57th Street, New York City 19, N. Y.

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Help?

You'll find it at the 1949 Carpet Fashion Openings, March 1-10. Watch for your favorite dealer's announcements. Also write for "Colorama," beautiful color-idea book by Clara Dudley, famous color-consultant for Alexander Smith. Send 25¢ to Clara Dudley, Alexander Smith & Sons Carpet Co., Dept. LY-8, 285 Fifth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

Alexander Smith
FLOOR-PLAN RUGS 1845 BROADLOOM CARPETS

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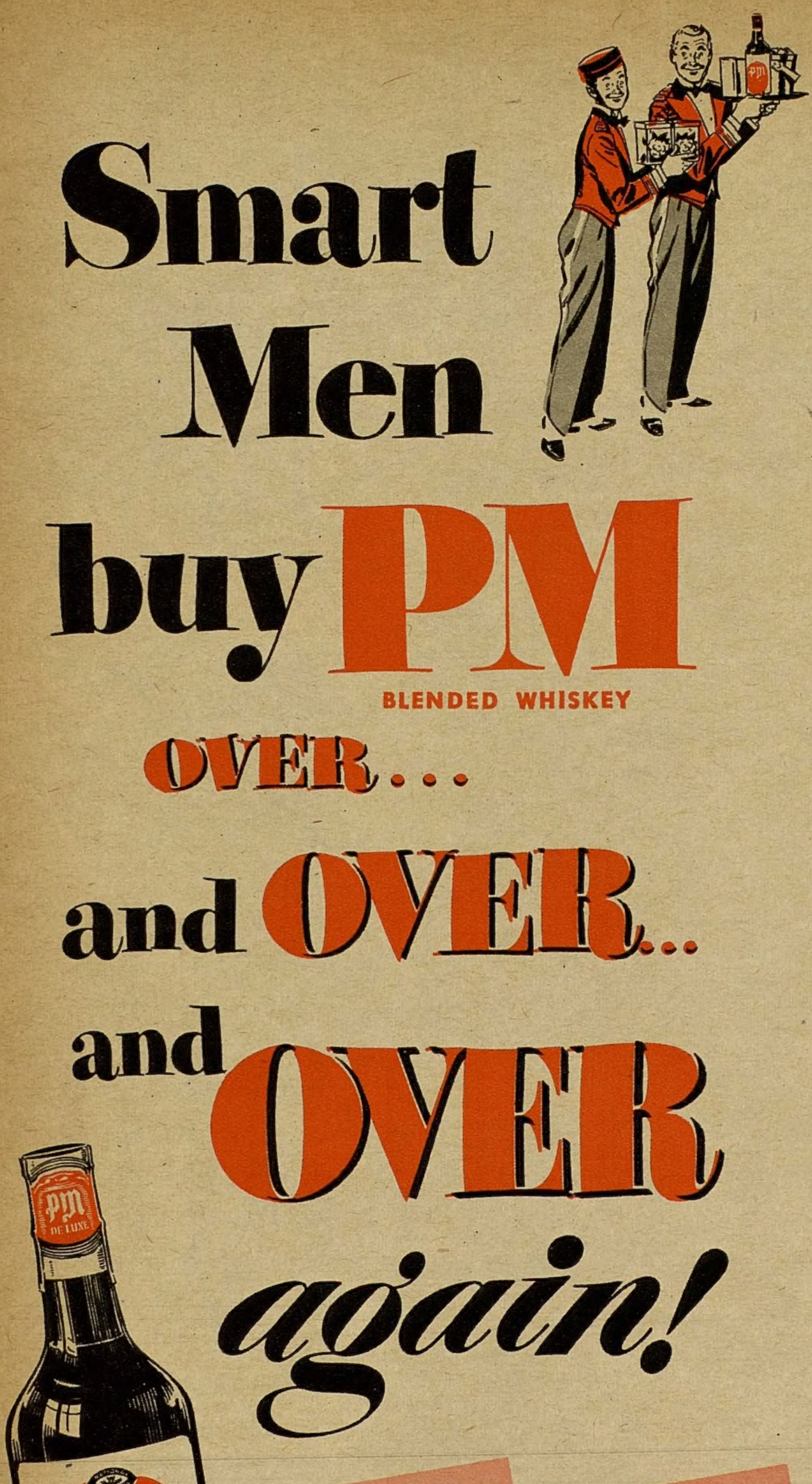
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Liberty VOX POP

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Poisonpenpopper

HAMPTON, VA.—Of all the incoherent, impossible, inane stories which have appeared in your magazine of late, Frame-Up, ending in the January issue, was the worst.

Why do you find it necessary to include a serial story in a monthly magazine, when between issues the continuity is lost?

Conclusion of this Frame-Up tonight has led me to write my first poison-pen letter to an editor. When the time wasted in perusing your magazine for finding something mentally stimulating is added to the ten cents, there is only one answer: You are robbing the public, sir.—*David J. Yaeger.*

What Figgerers'll Figger!

PASADENA, CALIF.—Reading in the January Liberty that Frank Headland, author of Where's Who, has collected an encyclopedia of funeral facts, I would like to ask a question: Does he know the graveyard population of the United States?

I once tried to figure it out by taking the census reports from the first one and the annual death rate per 100,000, but I almost lost my mind.—*A. G. Stamm.*

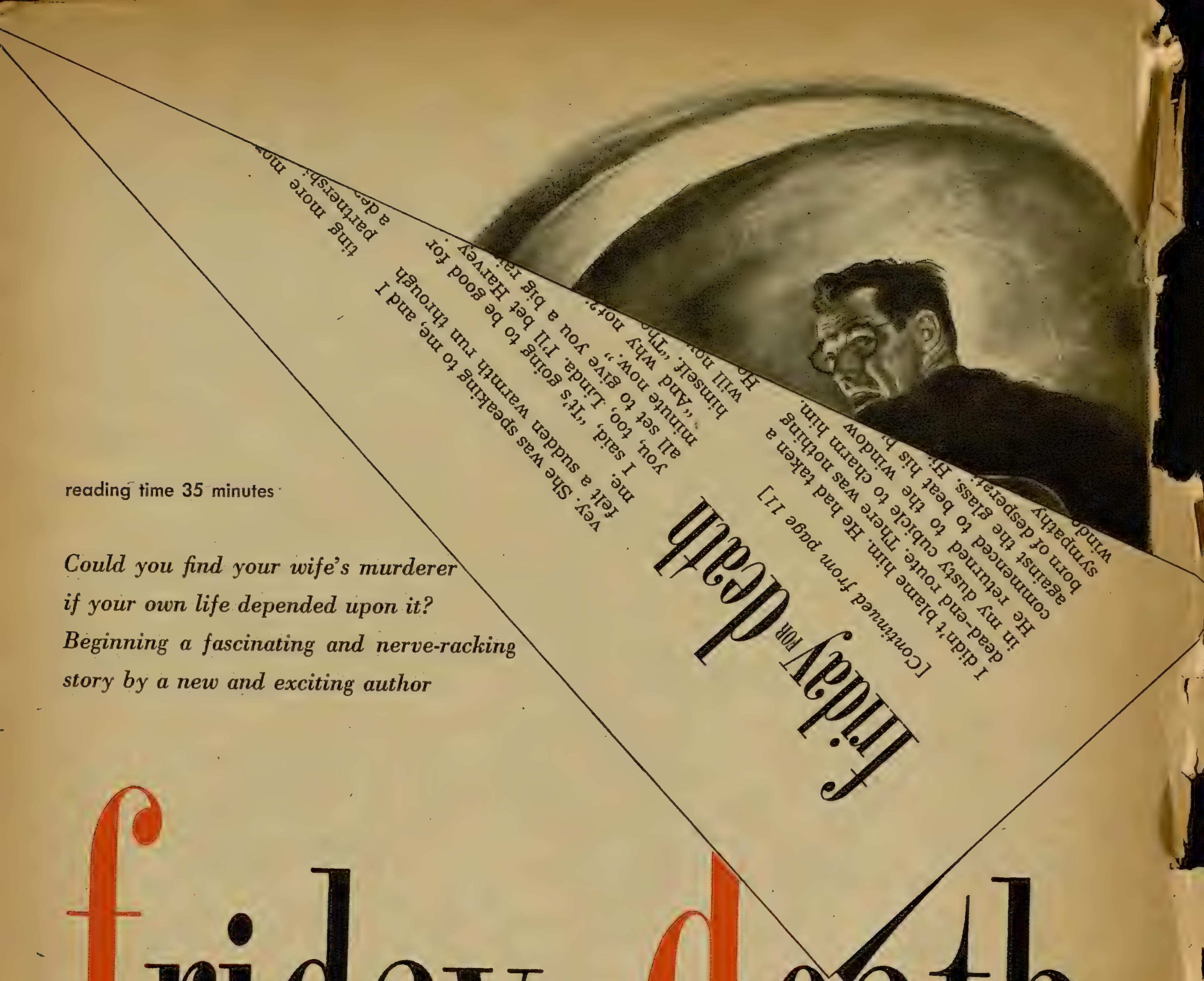
Backing Up Bristol

ENID, OKLA.—Claude M. Bristol's The Magic of Believing (December) was very interesting to me, for it is similar to my own beliefs.

When science ascertains that God is the One Power back of all movement and flow toward form, there will be no more differences existing between science and religion.—*Mrs. B. C. Morrow.*

Might've Been the Heat

CLEVELAND, OHIO—I just can't picture the two intelligent people illustrated for Bert and Grandma Moses (January) using such bad English.—*Steven W. Kocik.*



reading time 35 minutes

Could you find your wife's murderer if your own life depended upon it? Beginning a fascinating and nerve-racking story by a new and exciting author

friday FOR death

By LAWRENCE LARIAR

PART ONE

I finished typing my report. It was a quickie—one hour and ten minutes by the clock. I glanced over the familiar form:

THE JONAS TRIPP COMPANY

OFFICE COPY — LOCATION DEPARTMENT

Customer: ....
Subject: ....
Last Known Address: ....
REMARKS: ....
SUGGESTIONS: ....
Locater: STEVE MCGRATH

I buzzed Linda. I said, "I made the locate. The subject was a rank amateur."

Linda's laughter tinkled over the interoffice phone. "The locater is modest," she said.

"The locater is sitting here chewing his nails about the old man. Do you think Harvey's up at the hospital?"

"I don't think so. He would have phoned in. I think Harvey's just sleeping late today. He's been doing it often, ever since Jonas took sick. He'll wander in any minute, I'm sure."

"I'll wait for him then. I'm going to sit here and close my eyes and dream of fields of daisies. I'm going to dream that I'm on the outside for a change, on a plant for a wood nymph, a deadbeat sprite who frequents the remote forests of Central Park. The subject's name is Spring, and your locater will catch her one of these days, even if it means playing hooky from the Jonas Tripp Company."

"The locater has spring fever," Linda said. "Relax, Steve. I'll buzz you when Harvey comes in."

I relaxed.

A fat black bee hummed through the open window. He buzzed over my desk. He circled my office angrily and headed back to the light.

friday FOR death

[*Continued from page 11*]

I didn't blame him. He had taken a dead-end route. There was nothing in my dusty cubicle to charm him. He returned to the window and commenced to beat his brains out against the glass. His lunges were born of desperation. I felt a surge of sympathy for him. I went to the window and opened it wide and watched him highball it out into the sun, hang in the air for a flick of time, and then buzz away. I stared at him jealously until the sun ached my eyes.

◆ After that, my room seemed suddenly darker. After that, I dreamed at my desk. I heard the muted beat of Linda Bridges' hands on her typewriter. I wondered whether Linda felt the season's change in there. It was a fine day for the outdoors.

I looked at Gwen's framed picture and thought of our courtship when days like this meant a trip to the beach, or a long walk in Central Park, miles away now, beyond the claustrophobic walls that bound me to my job with Jonas Tripp.

Harvey Tripp came in. His boyish face had the look of sorrow that cats reserve for small birds. He leaned his fists on my desk top.

"Just now, Steve. I got a call from the hospital. The old boy never came out of the ether. Come into my office and we'll bury Uncle Jonas together. I have a bottle of embalming fluid—a fifth of Teacher's."

"I'm Teacher's pet," I said and followed him through the door to the reception room. Linda Bridges smiled up at me. She had soft eyes. Her eyes were not sad now, despite the fact that she might be upset over the old man's death. Linda always got along with Jonas. But then, Linda got along well with everybody. She had a sweetness, an inner calm that went well with her quiet beauty. I found myself comparing her with Gwen. Linda seemed genuinely interested in me. I couldn't hate her for it.

Harvey said, "Wouldst share the festive cup, Linda?"

She shook her head, still smiling at me. "I know how you two feel about it. I'm happy for both your sakes."

But she couldn't have meant Harvey. She was speaking to me, and I felt a sudden warmth run through me.

I said, "It's going to be good for you, too, Linda. I'll bet Harvey is all set to give you a big raise any minute now."

"And why not?" Harvey asked himself. "The members of the board will now meet in solemn session." He put a hand on my shoulder. "Your friend Mr. McGrath here will plead your case. How can you lose?"

Linda blushed and held her eyes away from me. "Seriously, Harvey, I've always been happy here. Jonas was an eccentric old man and I got used to him—long before you two came out of the army. You tell the members of the board to let me have just a wee bit more money to cover the high cost of living."

I said, "Consider it done, Linda. I vote for a twenty-five-buck raise in pay, Harv. Is the motion carried?"

Readers who know Lawrence Lariar as cartoon editor of this magazine for the last five years will now get to know him as an author. Although this serial marks his debut as a fiction writer for Liberty, it is not his first published work. He is the author of such books as The Worst of Witches, Death Paints the Picture, The Girl with the Frightened Eyes, and The Man with the Lumpy Nose, which won the Dodd Mead award in 1944 for the best mystery novel of the year. He is also the editor of Best Cartoons of the Year.

"Carried."

She thanked both of us. The little moment had built itself into something between us and I found myself wanting to talk more with Linda. She had all the charms that Gwen thought "corny" and "syrupy." We shared an unspoken comradeship that seemed to go deeper than surface friendship. But when we walked up Broadway, we parted at the subway entrance.

Harvey closed the door on Linda. I took the phone and called Gwen. The phone buzzed. It could be that Gwen was still asleep. I didn't want to disturb her, antagonize her, but I didn't drop the phone. This was a big moment for us. Harvey would free me from the horrors of office routine for the more interesting jobs in the streets of the city. I'd be getting more money and perhaps a partnership. The phone only buzzed, a dead sound, an empty hum. I tried to reason that Gwen was out shopping, gone only for a short while. This did not kill the tenseness in me. She should have clung to the phone all morning, waiting for my call. I had begged her to wait, last night. My hand went hard on the phone. I dropped it.

Harvey poured. "The subject wasn't in? Shopping, I suppose?"

"Shopping."

"Listen, Steve," he said seriously. "Hit me on the head if I'm sticking my nose in your affairs, but is everything all right with you and Gwen?"

It would have been good to tell him. But I couldn't bring myself to share my marital woes with him. Harvey had never approved of Gwen. He had been with me the night I met her. He seemed always more mature about women than I. He had labels for them, each type, each personality. He pinned his tags on them with a confidence born of experience. He had tagged Gwen that very first night. He had tagged her a "round-heel" then. I never forgot it. He had come to our house only once after the quick wedding at City Hall. It was a small, drunken jamboree, limited to the handful of close friends we had in the strange big city. Gwen had sensed that he didn't like her. He had a sharp tongue. He used it. Gwen responded in kind, and Harvey had walked out. Since then he had stayed away. Gwen invented a series of little Harvey jokes, cruel and cutting. She compared him with Jonas. His name never came up unless she wanted to goad me, to tease me.

◆ "It'll be all right from here on in," I said. "Gwen's been fed up with my job here for a long time. You know that."

"We'll fix it," Harvey said. "We'll fix it, but good."

Harvey's phone rang. For a flickering moment I thought it might be Gwen. My hope died when he laughed into the mouthpiece.

"Hello, big eyes," he said. "What's eating you?"

I envied him his casual aplomb with the women. I rose in my chair to leave him with his latest love. But Harvey held his hand over the mouthpiece. "I'll brush off this babe

(Continued on page 56)

Gwen lay on the bed. Her red robe was open. The pattern of it against the bedspread made a background of horror for her body. Her dead white body. ▶ ▶

Illustrated by Herman Giesen

Thousands of Negroes are constantly crossing the line into the white world, but for many women the strain is so terrific that they break under it

By NANETTE KUTNER

reading time 9 minutes

◆ In most of our large cities and many small towns there are thousands of Negroes who have successfully "gone over the line" and are now living as white. Among them, it is said, are several well-known athletes and members of Congress.

But you don't hear about the Negro women who "pass."

The roving male nature makes it easier for a man to pass completely, though it involves giving up his family as well as his friends. A woman finds passing harder to take.

Commencing this assignment, I contacted Walter White, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who could easily pass, himself. Like most members of his race, Mr. White doesn't fully approve of the practice of "passing," though he understands why people do so. He knew I wanted to meet a woman who was passing. He said, "I have just the girl for you. She attended an eastern woman's college as a Negro. In fact, she earned the highest marks bestowed by that college in twenty-four years. However, since graduation she works in New Jersey—and passes."

Mr. White promised to have me meet the girl. Finally he admitted he hadn't been able to get in touch with her, which was not surprising. Negroes who actively pass have too much at stake to risk revealing their identity. This was further emphasized when an appointment was made for me to meet—at dinner—another "passing" girl, a reporter. She failed to show up.

My next attempt succeeded. I was to visit a Negress who passes in two ways, sometimes because she is in the mood; more often unwittingly, as she goes about her normal day. Her skin is as fair as that of the Hesperus skipper's daughter, her shoulder-length hair as straight and golden blonde as Lana Turner's.

Although she assured me "white people live here too," her home is in one of the new and better New York City housing projects for Negroes, her modern, bookshelf-lined apartment a tribute to good taste and intelligence. Wearing well-cut slacks, she was the sophisticated hostess, a young woman who would be at home in any world. She has an excellent job with a government agency where she chooses to work as a Negro. On occasion she does pass. For example, she explained what happened when she took a cruise on a luxury liner.

"I had intended sharing my cabin with a friend who is very brown-skinned. At the last minute she couldn't go, so I sailed alone. Since I was the only Negro passenger, I thought it wiser to say nothing. I went around with the girl in the opposite cabin, and two men. When any race talk came up, I defended my people, but I never once let on I was colored. Before landing, the other three exchanged telephone numbers and addresses. I conveniently forgot."

She told me about her family. "My brother and sister-in-law are as light as I am; so is their daughter. I feel sorry for my niece, who was

(Continued on page 44)

Photo by Kurt Schelling

WOMEN

"Since I was the only Negro passenger [on the luxury liner], I thought it wiser to say nothing about my race."

WHO PASS AS WHITE

No girl for McGucken

. . . until he put a female named Jo to the test. And what a test!

By LAWRENCE A. KEATING

Illustrated by Lawrence Butcher

reading time 34 minutes

◆ When Berwyn B. McGucken had to break off his romance with a girl named Ellajane because she flunked his magazine article yardstick, How to Choose Your Wife, he bogged deep in the blues and refused to eat, though he would accept drink.

Berwyn, I knew, had hoped Ellajane would turn out to be the girl of his dreams, for all the dozens of previous applicants for his hand had proved unworthy and now were mere scratched-out names in his drawerful of bethumbed little notebooks. Ellajane's air-flow appearance was enough to rouse any man's ambition, and at their chance meeting at the Chicago Sky Club she had seemed to return bull's-eye answers to the magazine psychiatrist's questions Berwyn slyly dropped into their talk. But after their fourth date, toting up her score, he found it a dismal 69. So he had to ink out Ellajane's name like the others, because the How to Choose Your Wife article warned that positively 85 was minimum for an acceptable mate unless you already lived in Reno and your uncle was a judge.

Evidently, Berwyn grieved, he was not fated for mating, the only basic step in life given a man to decide, what with birth being so involuntary and demise practically always a matter of compulsion.

Sadly he turned his face away from matrimony. "I shall now shun worldly things, Ernie," he resolved. "I'll bury myself in the cathedral hush of Wisconsin's deepest woods." So he took a trial month's leave from his communications job with Wingtransit Airlines and talked me, Ernie Pfeiffer, into accompanying him, because Berwyn was sheer city boy, but I knew the great outdoors from my youth in a suburb.

One sticky August midafternoon, civilization's unmarriageable females lay in Berwyn's past and Lake Quichibogoma far north in his future.

I was at the steering wheel and the car was swallowing highway like a sword swallower downs a tasty saber. Behind us, its tires making like angry bees, our trailer with a canvas babushka over the latest in camp equipment now and then rattled its coupling to prove it still was in mad pursuit.

Beside me reposed the millions of cells comprising Berwyn B. McGucken. He had wiry forever-combed hair of flame color with a fire lane down its middle. He had a pale complexion reminiscently peppered with freckles, and baby-boots blue eyes, and, despite his twenty-eight years, a choirboy expression which many an aching heart remembers as fascinating but phony.

Nostalgia rode Berwyn's countenance and a hatbox of love mementos rode his knees. He kept dredging out aromatic letters and cabinet photos and tearing them up and letting the no-draft ventilation whip them to oblivion.

Berwyn held a pink note for me to smell. "Letty?" I hazarded. "The babe with tawny hair? Always fagged out at dinner, but at three A.M. she'd adore just one more night club?"

Berwyn nodded. "She scored eighty-two. Only three points under passing." Thoughtfully he eyed the return address on Letty's missive, but tore it up and fed it out the window.

Next from the box he took a photo of a busty pouting blonde. "Myrl had millions but she only scored fifty-one. On Question Eleven she guessed Chaucer must be Old English for dish. Ernie," he declared, "rich parents' daughters, if they didn't have rich parents, would be as useless to husbands as pockets to dogs. Without a chef they can't scramble an egg, and without a modiste they can't sew on a button." He shuddered. "When I jilted Myrl, she had her maid look it up in the dictionary under *g*."

Stuffing Myrl out the window, he took up a packet of lavender epistles and whiffed them. "Uhm. . . . Annette Mason, that buyer at Field's. Annette got zero on the homemaking questions – couldn't even mark a milk card. Accept a career girl for mate, Ernie, and your outlook is bilious.

"A home girl, on the other hand, may cook," he conceded, "but she has sinful ignorance about earning a beautiful dollar. I remember when I spoke to Zelda about the mint, she said she prefers strawberry."

We were getting along, with tall virgin pines walling the highway now. During the next dozen miles Berwyn tore up Margaret-Mae, Joan, Alice, and Cudgy, whose real name we couldn't recall. As he dug deeper into his box, Berwyn, I saw, felt lower and lower, though he was getting higher and higher from the fifth of rye between us on the seat. Suddenly, with a moan like tearing your shirt, he cranked down his window and gave the rest of his memorabilia the heave-ho.

A mile later Berwyn sighed. "A door has closed, Ernie. My life begins a new chapter."

Two miles later he felt his forehead. "No fever, but I feel queer. In the stomach."

"You're hungry, Berwyn. Gnaw some crackers and cheese."

"No." He listened to his metabolism. "I don't feel badly, just queer. Ernie," he breathed, "it's my soul bursting the rusty shackles of romance. All of a sudden, Ernie, I—boy, oh boy, I feel *cleansed!*"

I drove another mile. "Forest solitudes may be your destiny, Berwyn. You've never tried some to find out."

He nodded, inhaling deeply. "Ah, Ernie, how wond'rous the great outdoors! Consider the trustful nudge of the childlike fawn, the oratorios of orotund birds. What else they got at Lake Quichiwhatyoucallit?"

A passing sign foretold Sherer's Corners. "Berwyn, I've always felt you adhere too rigidly to that psychiatrist's scorecard. You'd have a wife, a mortgage, and a Cub Scout troop ere now if you hadn't measured every babe by those twenty-six questions."

"No, Ernie. As a cocoa broker you are wily enough, but about love your ignorance remains total."

"Amen," I said. "Yippee!"

◆

He tapped his sports-shirt pocket and I saw he still carried that magazine article How to Choose Your Wife with its opposite page titled How to Choose Your Husband.

"This Geiger counter of the psyche," Berwyn declared, "is the laurel wreath of our age. That's not only my opinion, Ernie—molded, I may say, by many a June-moon spoon. But I asked Doc Philips, our family quack, and I showed it to Professor Murdell at the U. Lays bare the turbine blades of bliss, they both agreed. If people would objectively quiz their intendeds pre-altar and have enough sterling character to accept the result—"

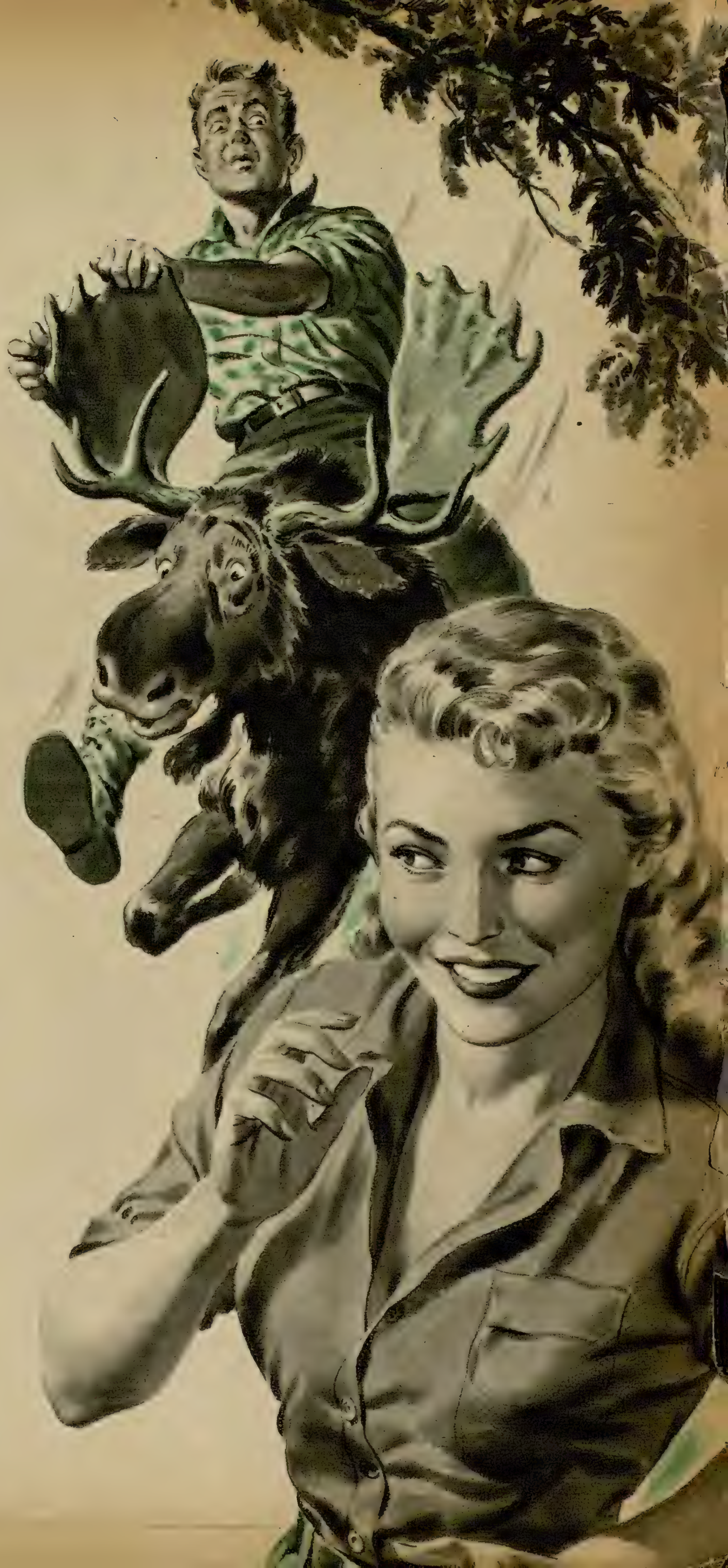
"I make ninety-six on the Husband quiz," Berwyn reminded. "It stamps me a dreamboat on the Hudson River Day Line of love. A girl catching such a marital genius ought to carry him over her threshold. But could I, on the other hand, expect *rapport* with some toots scoring a sand-trap fifty-five on the Choose Your Wife questions? I'd be praying," he shuddered, "for an A-bomb rescue.

"However," Berwyn conceded, "that psychiatrist ought to've worked out a third quiz about staying a bachelor. It would have saved me barrels of money. Ernie," he added, "when do we arrive at the forest primeval?"

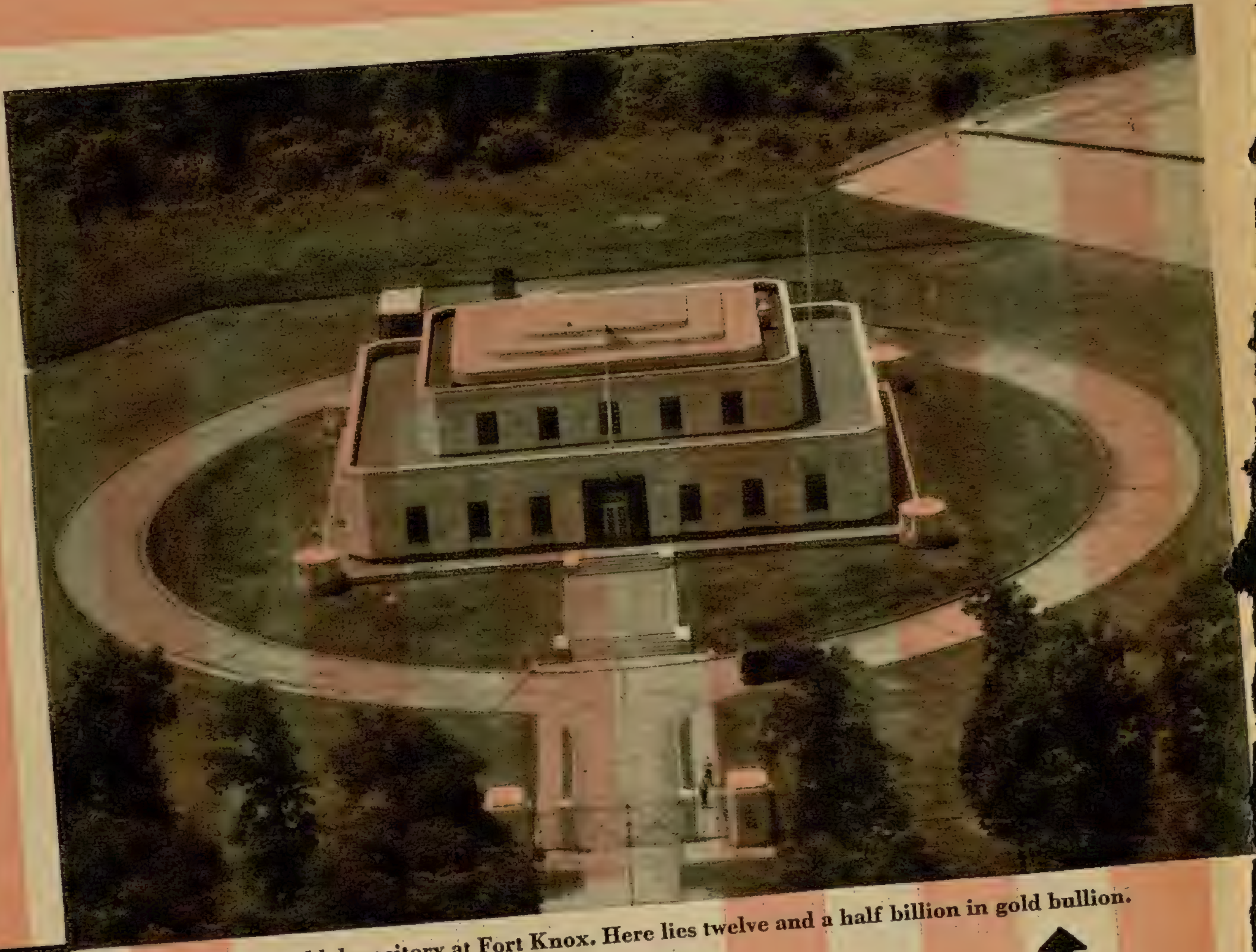
I studied our mileage. "Soon. You sure the guide will meet us?"

"Leroy Thompson at my office

(Continued on page 66)



Berwyn dropped and forked Moosie. That was one surprised critter. ▶



The U. S. gold depository at Fort Knox. Here lies twelve and a half billion in gold bullion.

Knox's 29,000 troops can defend treasure house from hidden posts.

how to break into Fort Knox

The precautions taken to guard the $12½ billions in gold at Fort Knox will amaze you. Here's what Liberty's reporter found when he tried to crash the gate

By STACY V. JONES

reading time 12 minutes

◆ Hold a nation-wide contest among safe-crackers with the worst criminal records, and pick a crew of the most expert. Then invite them for a week-end at the Fort Knox gold depository in Kentucky. Send away all the guards Saturday noon and shoo off the soldiery, so as to give the boys a free hand with their drills and nitroglycerin. Come back at 9 A.M. Monday—and officials of the Mint predict that the cracksmen guests still won't be inside the vault.

Of course the Bureau of the Mint has no intention of staging such a party. Indeed, there is probably no building in the country where visitors are less welcome.

Everybody knows about the treasure at Fort Knox. The girl whose mother used to say, "I wouldn't marry you for a king's ransom," now says, "I wouldn't marry you for all the gold in Fort Knox." And almost everybody would like to get a glimpse of the $12½ billions in gold bullion which it holds. But nobody gets in except Treasury officials, the rare fellow who has business there and an occasional V.I.P.I. (Very Important Person Indeed).

Almost daily the Treasury Department in Washington receives a letter saying the writer is going to Kentucky on a trip, and asking for a pass to the gold depository. All anybody gets is a chance to glimpse the building from the Dixie Highway, 30 miles southwest of Louisville, or from one of the roads in the military reservation.

The Fort Knox treasure house stands on a gently sloping hill, which gives the guards a clear view in all directions. It is surrounded by a high steel fence, floodlighted at night. Inside the fence and outside each corner of the building is a pillbox from which a guard can shoot along two sides of the building. These little turrets can be entered only from inside the depository. If need be, a guard can hole up in his turret indefinitely, with his own food, water, and heat. At each side of the gate in the steel fence is a sentry box like the turrets.

From Dixie Highway the depository looks like a large tomb. It is, indeed, a mausoleum for gold. No signs direct visitors to it; quite the reverse. If you turn off the highway onto Bullion Boulevard, one of the reservation roads, you will see a sign with the rather ominous inscription: "Danger. Keep Out. Armed Guard. U. S. Treasury Dept. Bullion Depository." Then, if you turn into the driveway, the first thing you see is exactly the kind of traffic sign that keeps you from driving the wrong way into a one-way street: "Do Not Enter."

Anybody who persists, as I did the other day, finds on his right the greeting: "*HALT*. State Your Business in Loud Speaker. *DO NOT ENTER* Without Permission." You are still a good 100 yards from the gate. A voice says civilly from the loud-speaker, "State your business." If you're a tourist or a wandering reporter and say so, that ends it. You don't get any farther.

In my own case, Fort Knox headquarters later vouched for my credentials and introduced me by telephone to the depository's captain of the guard, W. L. Jenkins, who granted me permission to drive up to the gate and look at the building from there. On this closer approach, I discovered a further sign near the gate: "Stop on Red Signal." As the signal wasn't red, I kept on, and parked. Master Sergeant Lyle H. Beardsley accompanied me from Fort Knox headquarters, and the view was a treat for him too: it was the closest he had got in three years' duty on the reservation. We walked along the fence and chatted with a guard in a sentry box who would not commit himself on anything but the weather.

The signs and loud-speaker are effective defense against tourists. So far, the only near-invasions have been by several drunks who had lost their way and approached the fence from the side. The depository guards called M.P.s from the fort to dispose of them. Then there was one valiant lady tourist who walked up and poked a camera between the fence bars. No unauthorized person has actually got inside the fence.

If anything really menacing approached, the guards could call help, in a matter of minutes, from the 29,000 troops on the surrounding military reservation of Fort Knox proper.

◆ Once a legitimate visitor is admitted through the gate, he proceeds to the front door, under surveillance from the pillboxes and sentry boxes. The front door is double. After he is admitted through the first, it is locked behind him, and he must identify himself to the guards before he is admitted to the building through a second door.

A burglar's problems would really begin inside the second door. The vault is like a treasure chest enclosed in a trunk, with its own walls and ceilings. (Here, of course, I am forced to rely on descriptions by Treasury officials, for no reporter has been admitted to the temple of gold.) Our burglar finds himself, then, in a high corridor between the

(Continued on page 54)

BLOOD ON THE SNOW

Four men and two girls—each in their separate hell of fear, deadly as the canyon snows through which they struggled

By GEORGE ARMIN SHAFTEL

Illustrated by Martin Gulser

reading time 35 minutes

CONCLUSION: John strained to free himself from the pressure of the snow enveloping him. Strained until his heart thudded violently and sweat ran from his pores, to turn clammy in the cold. Resting, he tried to think, tried to engross his mind so that claustrophobia would not craze him. *Someone had taken a shot at them. Someone had caused this snow slide by shooting at them. Why?*

Abruptly his throat choked up. He heard slow, heavy footsteps approaching on the surface of the snow.

"Gunnar! *Gunnar!*"

It was Mary calling out. If it was the man who had shot at them, coming to see—

"Mary! Where are you?"

Gunnar's voice! John's taut body eased in profound relief.

Using a ski pole as a stick, Gunnar helped Mary get free. Then they aided John to release himself.

"I saw you fall, Gunnar! That bullet hit you?"

"No, just whipped overhead. I didn't fall. I threw myself flat on my face."

"Any further sign of that sniper?"

Gunnar shrugged. "The slide covered me and rolled me out to one side in an eddy. I played dead. That gunman saw us all go down and probably figured he'd done his job, and left. No sign of him now."

"Shooting at us," Mary breathed. "I d-don't understand it!"

"Some bushed trapper, gone crazy with loneliness," John said, as if he were sure of it. "Are you all right, Mary?"

"I'm black and blue all over, and I'm still shaking, I was so scared."

They recovered their skis, and John deliberately started on ahead of the others. That gunman had probably left in a hurry; but if not, he had to be flushed out before Mary and Gunnar came into range. . . . John ached as if he had been through a rock crusher, and reaction had left him weak and shivery. But he climbed steadily on up the canyon, past the red snow, on toward the summit, choked and sweating with tension. He came out onto the flat above without a sound or movement from the brush on the rimrock. Then he peered over the snow for sign of skis. He could see none; and he realized that by now the wind-driven snow had probably obliterated all signs. He stared out over Alpine Meadows.

And abruptly he stopped dead in his tracks.

◆

Here was open meadowland, but a half mile farther on was a rocky ridge fringed by lodgepole pines; and there John saw smoke rising in a column that whipped in the gusts of wind.

"A campfire!" he told Gunnar and Mary. "Survivors from that plane."

"Or maybe the lunatic who shot at us?" Gunnar said.

"We'll find out. Stay behind me a ways," John ordered.

He led on across the flat snow. They reached the stretch of timber, and started through it. Then John saw the campfire. It burned in front of a lean-to of pine limbs.

Someone shouted. A man came hurrying to meet John, awkwardly sinking thigh-deep into the snow with each step. His gloved hands held no weapon. John beckoned to Mary and Gunnar.

Mary said, "Thank God, there *are* survivors!"

The man coming toward them was tall and brawny. As a young fellow he had probably been very well built, but now there was gray in the thick red stubble over his face, his broad shoulders sagged, and he had a pot belly that bulged out the front of his city overcoat. He wore a muffler, and a strip of blanket around his head covered his ears, and strips of blanket swathed his shoes. His fleshy jowls sagged and his dark-brown eyes were haggard. He could not talk coherently at first, and just wrung John's hand and swore in a monotone of heartfelt thankfulness.

He tipped his hat as Mary and Gunnar arrived, and it was oddly incongruous, for he kept on swearing, utterly unaware.

"You alone?" John demanded. "Anybody else with you?"

"The plane stewardess is here, and Sam Alcock. My name's Cantu, Nick Cantu. They're over there in the lean-to. The stewardess has a fractured leg."

"How many were in the plane?" Mary asked.

"Fourteen, counting the crew," Cantu answered. "They were all killed but the stewardess and three passengers."

"But you say only two people are here with you?"

"That's right. One went for help. A girl named Agnew. Did she get out? Did she send you here to help us?"

"No," said John. "Come on, let's go to the lean-to."

When the young stewardess saw them, she burst into tears. Mary dropped down beside her and held her tightly in her arms. Sam Alcock was a thin man of forty-five with a pale-eyed face that was all bald forehead and nose, his lean jaw receding under a wispy mustache. His features had a neurotic's deep self-pity.

"Time you got here!" he raged. "Did you bring a doctor?"

"Look, Sam," Nick Cantu said. "This isn't a rescue party—"

"Damn it, we need blankets, we need medicine, we need—"

"Relax. You can sue the air line when we get back to San Francisco." To the others, Cantu said, "Sam's my office manager."

John asked, "Are you sure there are no other survivors? Or anybody else in this area? Somebody shot at us a little while ago."

"We haven't seen another living soul," Cantu insisted. "And none of us has got a gun," he added wryly.

The stewardess was a pretty,

(Continued on page 71)

HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN

reading time 33 minutes

By ELLIOTT WHITE SPRINGS

Illustrated by James A. Ernst

◆ The secretary to the publisher of the National Home Magazine was exasperated, baffled, and perplexed. For the first time since she had taken up her duties four years before, Mr. Hoskins was unaccountably missing. All morning important persons called by appointment, waited until their patience was exhausted, and stalked out in rage. The telephone had been ringing constantly, and she had been unable to think of the right answers. No, Mr. Hoskins was not in. No, she didn't know where Mr. Hoskins was. No, she didn't know where Mr. Hoskins could be reached at another number. No, Hoskins was not at his apartment. Well, she couldn't help it if Los Angeles did want Mr. Hoskins!

By three o'clock Miss Fagin was frantic. She had called everywhere, but not a trace of her missing employer could she find. His engagement pad checked with the callers, and his valet reported that he had left the apartment with his briefcase at nine thirty as usual.

She consulted the executive editor. He could not help her. He could only assure her that Mr. Hoskins had never done such a thing before. For fifteen years he had been as regular as taxes. They went over the engagement pad together. The first engagement at ten was mysterious, but the next one at ten thirty was with the syndicate manager who had been summoned the day before to appear and explain why the Middle West wasn't enthusiastic over the Farm Board Department.

Miss Fagin was considering calling up the accident hospitals, when in walked her employer.

"Oh, Mr. Hoskins!" she gasped.

"Yes, Miss Fagin?" he said cheerfully.

"Oh, Mr. Hoskins, I'm so glad you're here. I was beginning to fear something had happened to you."

"It has, Miss Fagin."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. Mr. Wilson was here and Miss Miller and Mr. Helman."

"Yes, I know. If anyone calls, tell them I'm in conference for the rest of the afternoon."

Miss Fagin retired. Though her pulse was racing with the excitement, she could not bring herself to ask Mr. Hoskins what had happened to detain him. She knew it must have been something very important. It was the first time he had ever failed to keep an engagement.

A man may not be a hero to his valet, but Mr. Hoskins was a demigod to Miss Fagin. She had never really caught her breath since he had moved her from the big outer office into the small private one adjoining his. She could defy the wily insurance agent and outmaneuver the high-pressure bond salesman without reaching for her compact, but in the presence of Mr. Hoskins she was a mere woman—and a very weak one at that.

After Miss Fagin had left, Mr. Hoskins called a number on his private telephone.

"Mr. Cohn, please. Mr. Hoskins speaking. Yes. Hello, Cohn. Hoskins. All right. Say, is that offer still open? Yes, on your terms. Well, I'll take you up on it. Have your lawyer draw up the papers and take them to Schmidt. I'll sign them tomorrow. You get the National Home—lock, stock, and barrel. Payment as outlined with your endorsement. Yes, I'll promise you I won't offer any competition for five years. Or ever. I'm through with the publishing business. Good luck to you. Good-by."

He hung up and leaned back in his chair. He sighed and remained in reverie. His race was run.

Twenty years before, he had come to the National Home Magazine, then a small monthly struggling in Kansas City with a staff of five, who not only composed the text but set the type and ran the press. Now he left it an American institution that could outbid the world for the writers its public wanted, and whose policy was accepted as gospel in two million homes. There were two floors of offices on Fourth Avenue filled with more pretty girls than Collier's or Liberty or Cosmopolitan or Ziegfeld's Follies could boast; and more pull was required to get an interview with one of its executives than with a Cabinet officer.

For twenty years he had preached temperance, efficiency, progress, and the sanctity of American family life. He had taught health, optimism, and charity in monthly installments and given his public the best of wholesome fiction, helpful hints, scientific advice, and honest advertisements. He had told the farmers when to plant their crops and how to doctor their cows; he had instructed their wives what to feed the baby and where to get Mary's clothes for college.

Now in his early forties, he must take his hand from the helm. He sighed again.

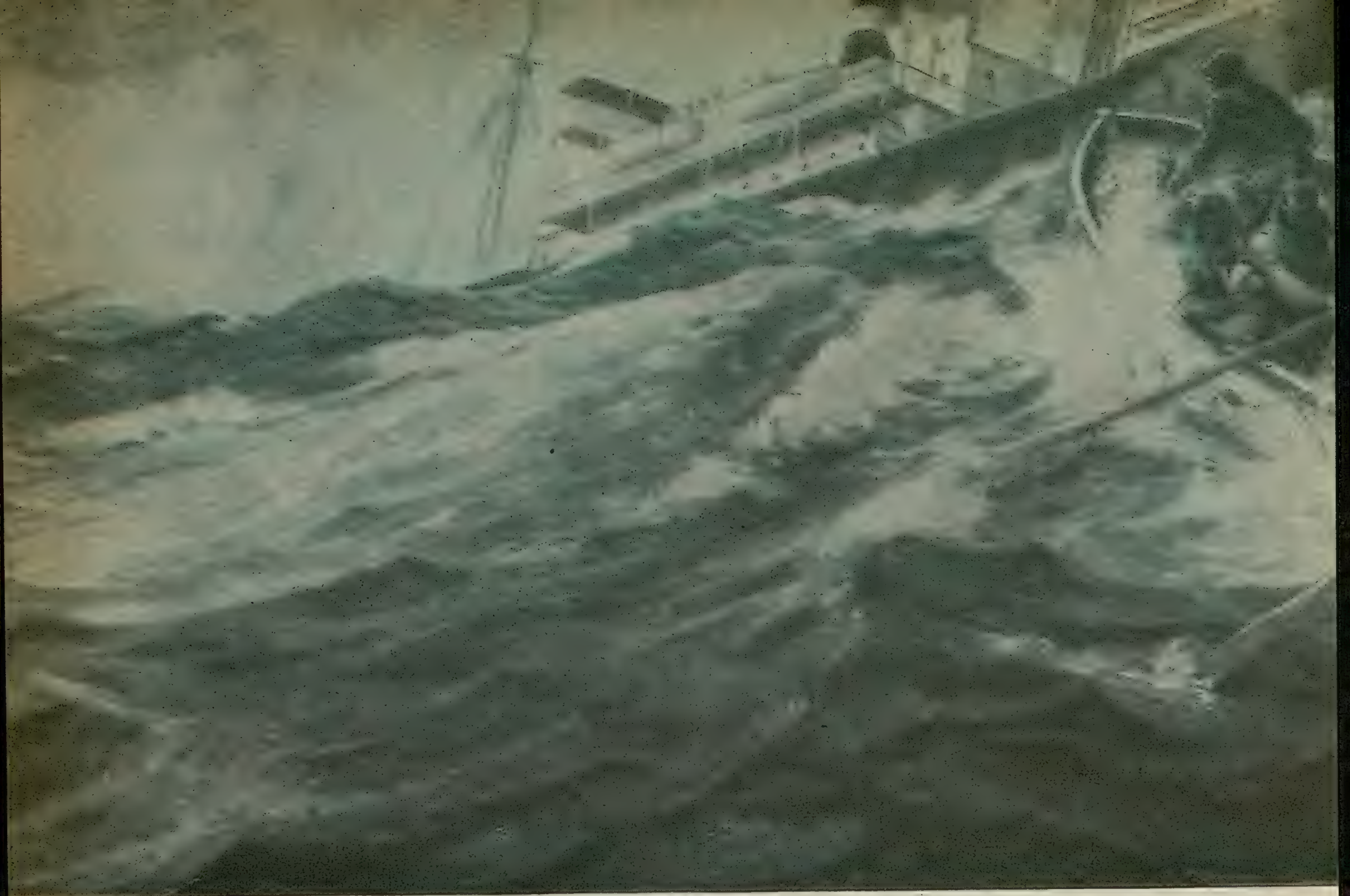
◆ A tear moistened his cheek. He laughed and wiped it away. The joke was on him. He had taken his own medicine conscientiously. Every morning he went through the exercises prescribed by his Health Department; three times a week he played golf or indoor tennis according to his Sports Department; he had never broken the Prohibition Law which his Editorial Department had supported; he had never dipped into the fleshpots; and yet—!

He leaped from his chair in an-

(Continued on page 77)

GOING ON?

Could this seductive creature be the prim, cool secretary he had never noticed in the office?



bar of the Cyclone

The ship wallowed helplessly in the giant storm—yet there was a still greater menace

By SI PODOLIN

Illustrated by Edward M. Stevenson

reading time 28 minutes

◆ The streams of wheat hissed steadily into the SS. Integrity's holds, sounding as though a hundred sea valves had been opened.

"She's got to take nine thousand eight hundred ton!" yelled the port captain.

"You'll sink her first!" yelled back Mr. Pugh.

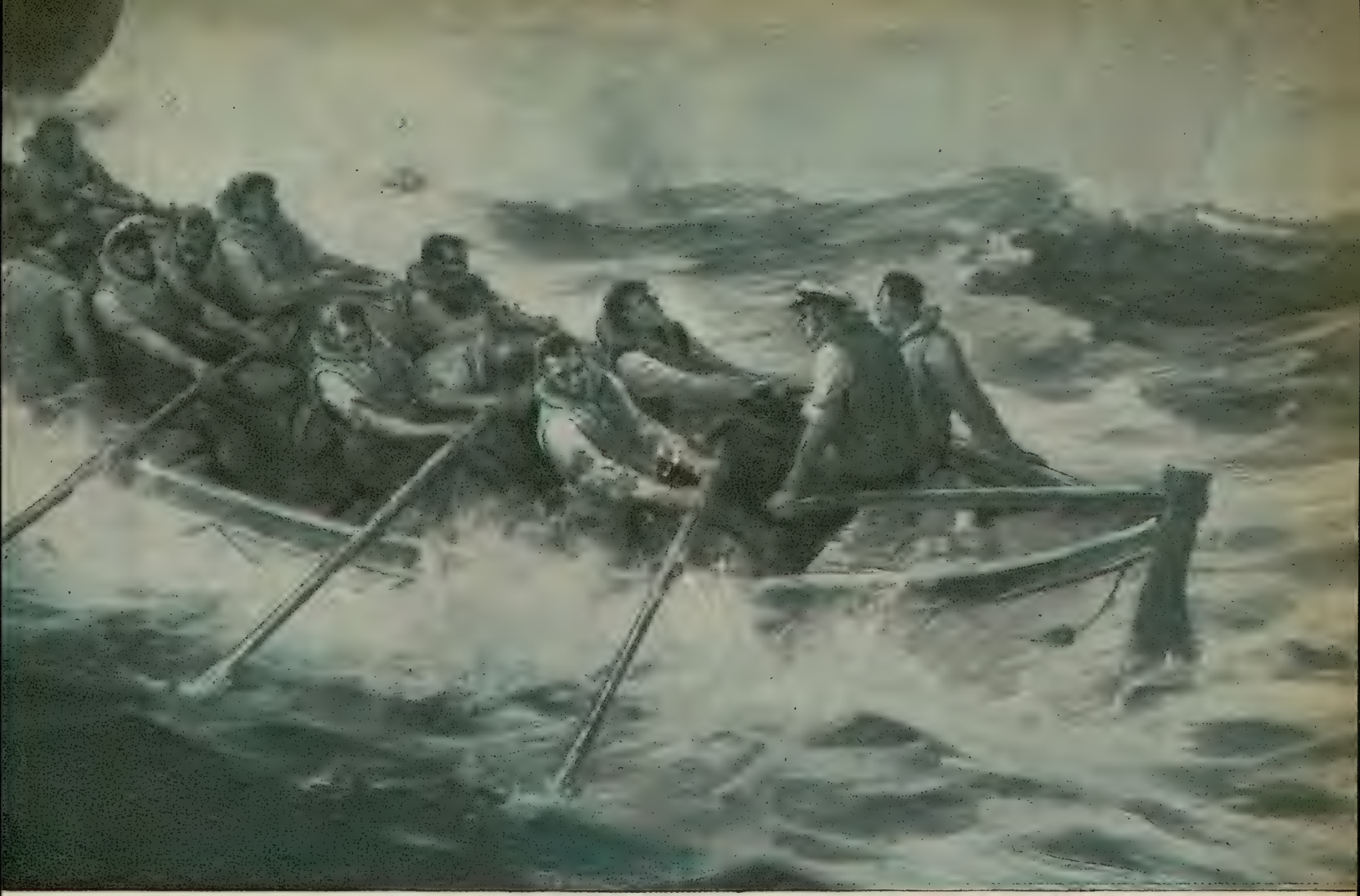
"Get the chief engineer to pump out five hundred ton of fresh water!" screamed the port captain angrily. "That'll make room for another five hundred ton of wheat."

For a moment Mr. Pugh was taken aback. Then he turned to the SS. Integrity's skipper, who was standing hard by, and shouted:

"You hear what he says, Captain McCord? That means we'll only have a hundred ton of fresh water to go to sea. It's suicide!"

With a deep grunt the SS. Integrity's skipper left the mate's side, made his way over to the midships house and glanced down at the Plimsoll mark. He was a man pushing sixty-five; when he walked, his knees bent stiffly.

"She's just about on her marks now," he said.



"I want a full cargo in her!" shouted the port captain, clenching his hairy fists until the old-fashioned compass card tattooed on the back of his right hand was distorted.

"The underwriters—" began Captain McCord meekly.

"I've got my orders from the office," bellowed the port captain.

"They don't have to sail her," interjected Mr. Pugh. "All they've got to do is sit up there on their fat sterns and push little pins into a chart."

"Damn it," bellowed the port captain, yanking his hat off his head and slamming it to the ground, "I said I want nine thousand eight hundred tons of grain in her and, come hell and high water, I'm going to get it!"

Captain McCord puffed rapidly at his cigar and said nothing.

"There're loads of skippers on the beach today," came from the port captain pointedly. "It's not like it was during the war, when we had to take anything that drifted along, even masters so old they couldn't see to take a sight." He stared hard at the SS. Integrity's skipper.

"With only a hundred tons of boiler and drinking water in her," persisted Mr. Pugh, "she's not seaworthy."

"That's the skipper's concern," snapped back the port captain. "If he says she's not seaworthy, then of course we'll have to hold her up." Not once did the port captain take his eyes off Captain McCord.

Awkwardly the old man turned to Mr. Pugh. In a dull lifeless voice he ordered, "Mr. Mate, tell the chief engineer to pump it out."

◆

The distance between the navigation lights on the river band was 6.3 miles and it was taking the SS. Integrity twenty-eight minutes to come abeam of them; which, Mr. Pugh calculated, gave the vessel a speed of fourteen knots. If the fair tide continued, they ought to be at sea the following morning.

The mate took his eyes off the light they had just passed. On the vessel's port hand, seemingly close enough to reach out and touch, rose a heavily wooded mountain. To the north the deep blue Canadian sky was flooded with the aurora borealis; the lights flashed across the heavens like the unfurled banners of ancient legions, illuminating each mountain peak and tree until it stood out with etched clarity.

Mr. Pugh was standing on the port wing of the bridge next to the French-Canadian river pilot when Captain McCord approached him.

"That St. Peter's Lake up ahead?" he asked.

"Aye," answered the mate.

"Call down below," the skipper continued, "and tell the chief engineer he can start taking on water for his boilers."

For several moments Mr. Pugh stood there without moving; then he asked the old man how much the engineer was going to take on board.

"He knows," said the old man, and brusquely left the bridge.

Now the whole set-up was getting squared away in the mate's mind and anger began to boil inside him. Taking hold of the phone handle, he spun it vigorously. On

bar of the Cyclone

(*Continued from page 25*)

the other end of the wire he could hear the engine's pistons beating rhythmically. Then Mr. Wood got on the phone.

"You can start taking on water," the mate said, making an effort to control his anger.

"I ought to refuse to do it," screamed Mr. Wood, his voice sounding shrill and effeminate over the phone.

"This is a hell of a time to start beefing," said the mate.

"Now, look here, Mr. Mate," wailed the chief engineer. "I'm not responsible for this. I didn't know what they were up to."

"Don't hand me that crap, chief," shouted the mate. "You knew all along that you couldn't go out on a hundred ton of boiler water."

"Didn't I load up at first? What more could I do?" Mr. Wood sounded as though he were about to burst into tears.

"How much water you taking on?" asked the mate.

"The old man says five hundred tons."

The mate whistled. "That'll put us down another ten inches."

"Saints almighty!" the mate heard Mr. Wood cry. Slamming the receiver on its hook, Mr. Pugh left the bridge and piled angrily into the old man's office.

Captain McCord was sitting at his desk puffing on a cigar, his round face flushed with whisky.

"A neat trick, sir," said the mate, his voice full of rancor. "We let the underwriters see us pull away from the dock exactly on our marks. It's all cozy and legal, eh? Then we go fifty miles down the river and take on the five hundred tons of water we pumped over the side in Montreal to make room for grain."

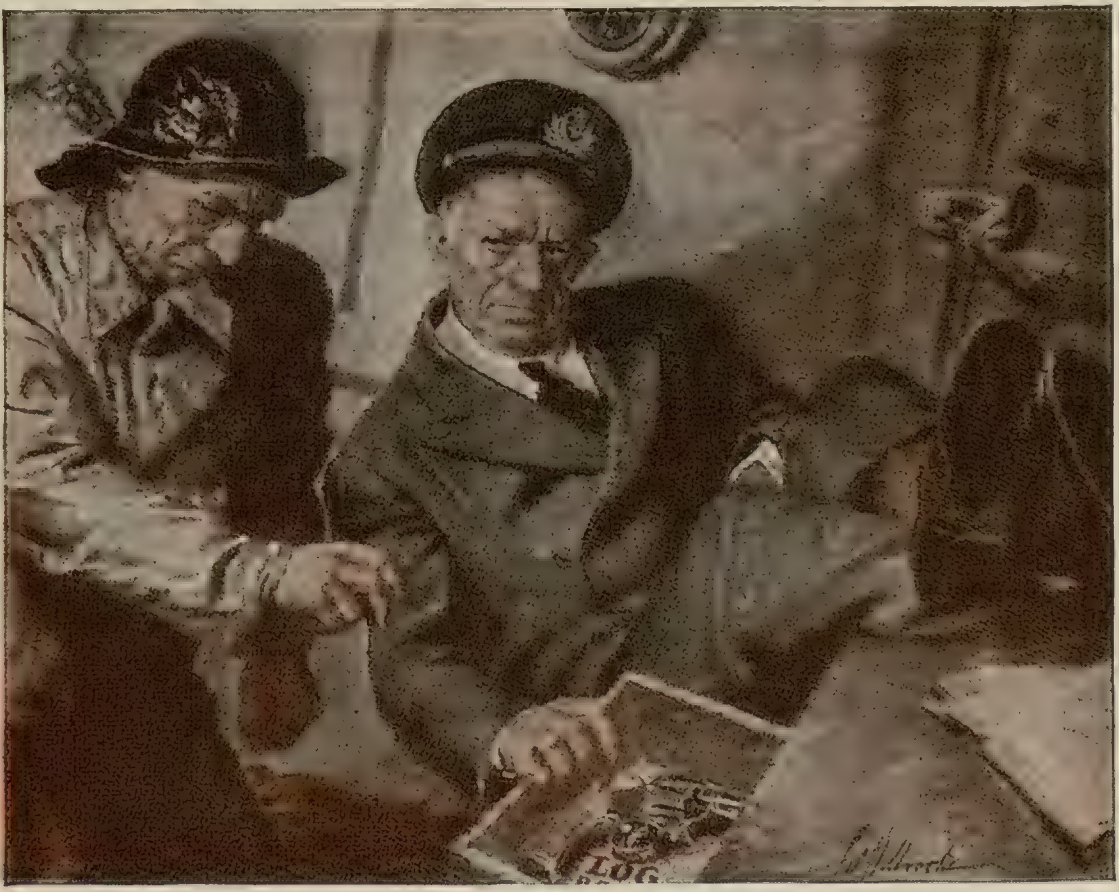


Illustration by Pat Holbrooke

Captain McCord opened the drawer of his desk. The incriminating logbook was in it and beside it, the ship's revolver. Mr. Pugh stood as though he were rooted.

Captain McCord puffed rapidly on his cigar and nervously poured himself a drink.

"That," continued the mate accusingly, "gives us ten inches less freeboard for the voyage."

"This is no place to stand your watch, Mr. Mate," said the old man with a show of indignation. "Your place is on the bridge."

"The pilot's out there."

"Are you refusing to obey a command at sea?" rasped the captain.

"No," muttered the mate, and turned to leave.

"Hold on," said Captain McCord, his voice growing calmer. "Now, let's look at it fairly, Mr. Mate. If I said the vessel was unseaworthy, the port captain would've told me to pack my gear. I'd've been through."

"The sailors down below are in their bunks sleeping as though they were riding a sound vessel, sir. It's not fair to them."

◆

Shakily the old man poured himself another drink.

"They're your responsibility, sir," continued the mate.

"I tell you," insisted the old man, "I couldn't help myself." As he swallowed the whisky his hand trembled badly. "If they took this ship away from me," he mumbled, "I'd never get another. Never. I haven't saved a cent."

"Damn it, sir, you're dealing in men's lives, not just in tons of grain. You going to make an entry of the five hundred tons of water in the log, sir?" asked the mate.

"No. I don't want it in the log."

"I'll damn well enter it on my own, sir!" shouted Mr. Pugh. "I'll expose the whole lousy racket."

"Blast it all, son, listen to reason. You'll be getting your skipper's ticket soon and you'll be looking for a ship. Last mate I had got a ship from this very company. On my recommendation, mind you."

"Sir," said the mate indignantly, "I'm a sailor, not a politician."

Captain McCord was growing extremely drunk, gulping down the whisky as though it were water.

"Used to be," he said lugubriously, "that the skipper of a ship was the undisputed master, not an errand boy, like now. They loaded her the way he said, or else."

"If I was skipper of this ship," persisted the mate, "and something happened and we lost any of the men, I swear, sir, I couldn't live with myself."

"Do you think I wanted it this way?" The captain's china-blue eyes grew watery. "Don't you think I've got a conscience too?"

"Sir, I'm going to log it."

"You're getting your wind up for nothing, son," said the old man thickly. "We're going to have fair weather all the way across. Yes, sir, it's going to be a pleasant passage."

As the mate stood beside the old man's desk, Captain McCord let his head sink slowly until it rested on his arms. He was fast asleep, snoring so violently that the papers before him rose and fell with each boozy gust.

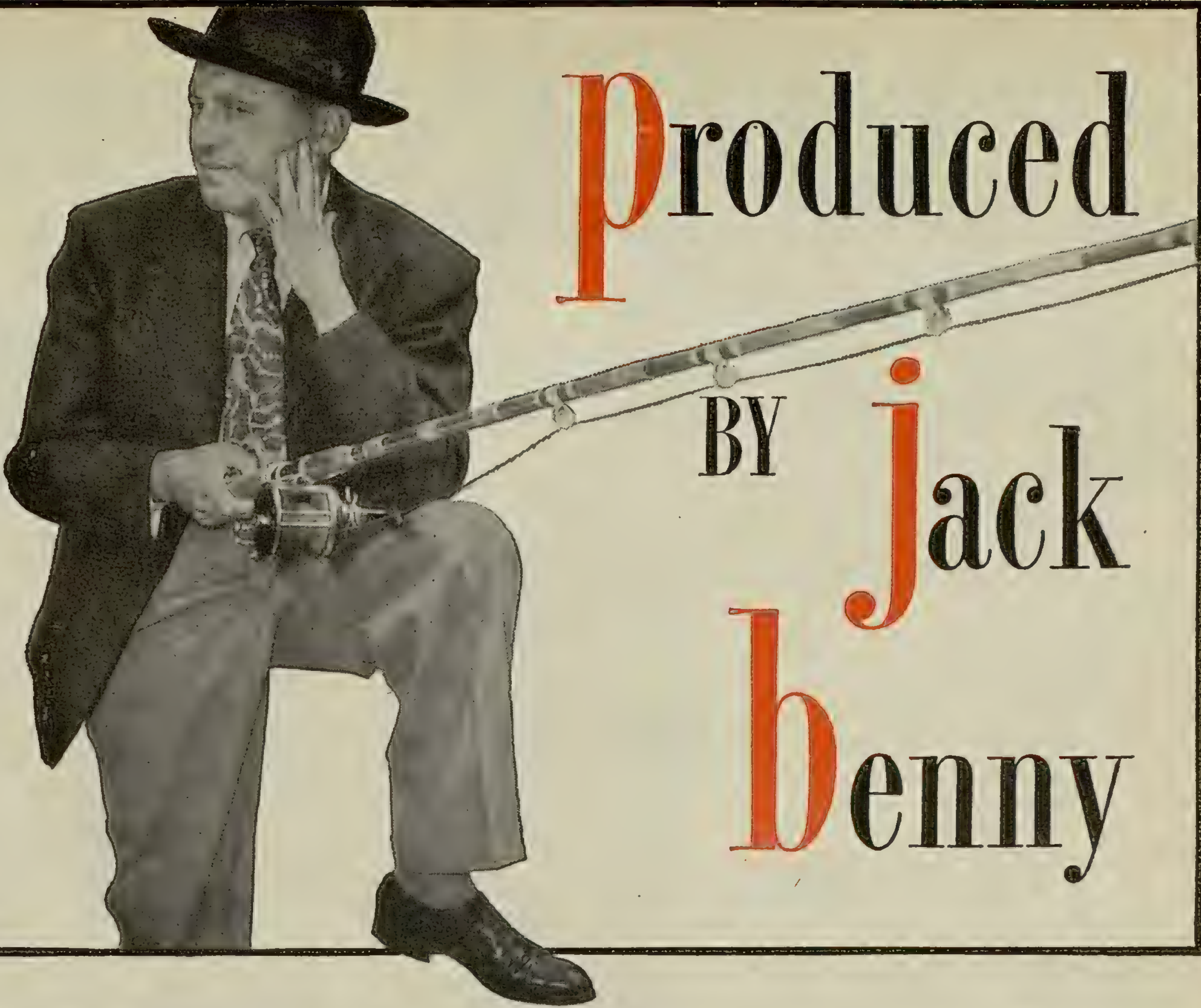
◆

For six days Captain McCord's weather prediction held true. The prevailing westerly winds remained steady, providing the SS. Integrity with a following sea, which helped her along at an average speed of twelve knots.

Sunset of the seventh day found the mate up on the flying bridge taking an amplitude.

(Cont. on page 62)

reading time 3 minutes



Produced BY Jack Benny

When Jack Benny suggested The Lucky Stiff—a Craig Rice killer-diller—as film material, he got a fast twist of the arm and his first assignment as a film producer

By ELIZABETH WILSON

◆ It was inevitable that some day Jack Benny would turn his hand to producing a motion picture. And that's exactly what has happened. A few months ago, Jack, who is one of the most avid mystery-story fans, read Craig Rice's best selling The Lucky Stiff. Miss Rice has a neat way of combining laughs with goose pimples. Benny was so intrigued that he immediately suggested to Amusement Enterprises officials that they make a picture of it. They read the book and agreed that it would make an excellent mystery comedy.

"We'll make the picture," they said, "if you'll produce it."

Before Benny could even find the time to say "Rochester," his name was on a contract and he was working with writer Lew Foster.

The Lucky Stiff will reach the movie theaters shortly. It's no Gone with the Wind, but it has been hailed by previewers as a bright comedy that bears the stamp of Jack's amazing sense of timing and his perfect feel for effortless comedy. As Jack explains it, "I didn't want a big epic as my first picture production, because I felt that I didn't want to shake the world my first time out. I just wanted to make a good comedy."

Although he's America's most penurious character in the minds of his radio listeners, Jack Benny is no tightwad in real life. He proved this again when he chose the cast for The Lucky Stiff. He insisted on top-salaried stars like Dorothy Lamour, Brian Donlevy, and Claire Trevor for his leads. And for the supporting roles he rounded up such capable actors and actresses as Irene Hervey, Marjorie Rambeau, Robert Armstrong, Richard Gaines, and night-club comic Billy Vine.

When it came to selecting a director, a lot of big names were suggested, but Jack has always held that "the play's the thing" and that the man who writes the script should direct it. So writer Lew Foster got the job.

Now that Jack has a producer credit under his belt, the question arises whether he would like to give up acting to devote all his time to production. "That's a difficult question," says Benny, "but I don't think I'll ever get the ham out of me long enough to quit acting."

A big-time worrier in his own right, Benny went through all the ulcer-making horrors of production. When he took the picture to Huntington Park, California, for a sneak preview, he did a lot of fingernail-biting. "It was like opening at the Palace," he says. "Then the audience began to laugh. They laughed in just the places I expected them to. The next day I started to bite my nails all over again. The thought occurred to me that maybe I had just had the good luck to hit a bunch of good laughers. The next audience might be different."

So he took the picture to a theater in Glendale which, according to trade gossip, is a hard preview town. Again the audience roared in just the right places. Benny relaxed. But only for a moment. "Now I guess I'll just have to wait and wonder what the critics will say about it." ◆◆

IT ONLY SOUNDS THAT WAY

There are few things in nature which Hollywood's sound engineers can't improve on—and don't!

By Joseph Wechsberg

reading time 10 minutes

A FEW years ago a famous tenor appeared in a motion picture and finished a song with a formidable high C which he held for about 15 seconds. Even the tenor's fans admitted they had never heard anything like that. The high C sounded too good to be true.

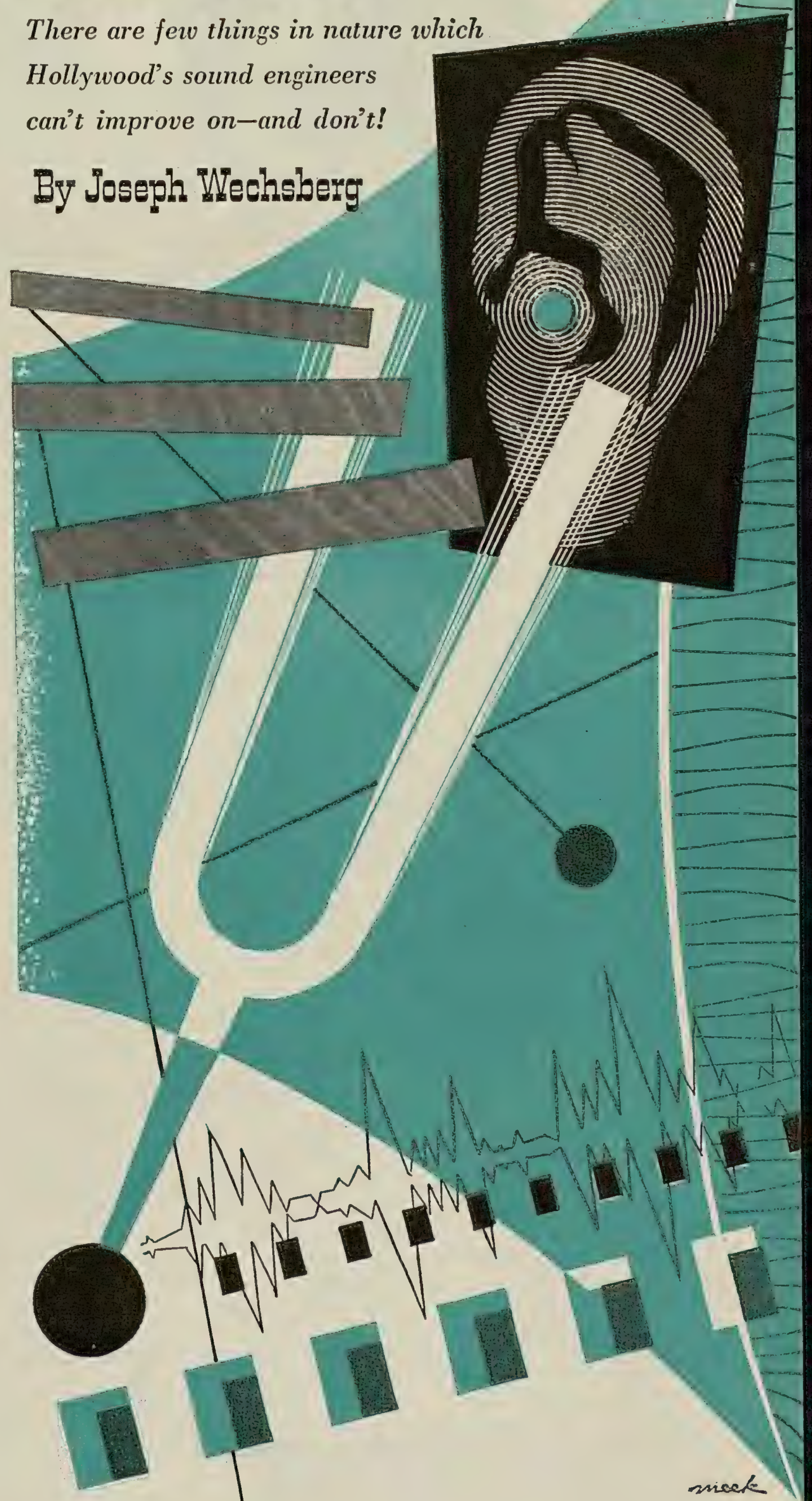
It wasn't.

The synthetic high C, once one of the major studios' major top secrets, today is just another trick. Actually, the tenor did sing a brilliant high C, which was recorded. It lasted four seconds, which is not bad for a high C (or for a tenor, either), but not good enough for Hollywood. So the wizards of the sound department made an extra "loop" of the high C sound-recording film, synchronized it with the original sound track, and inserted it between the actual beginning and end of the tenor's high C. An eager front-office underling suggested that the high C be extended to, say, one minute—"That'll kill 'em"—but cool heads prevailed, and it was decided that 15 seconds was plenty.

No credit went to the sound engineers. Their names never appear on theater marquees, though some of our most prominent stars would sound awfully flat—or sharp—without their help. The soundmen patch up the best parts of the two or five or 15 recordings which a singer makes of the same song; they add color and drama to a voice, put bad notes back into key. Some of our most famous singers lack that trick of the ear that is known as "perfect pitch." The dubbing mixers go over the recordings like surgeons, cutting out faulty sharps and flats until the recording is as nearly perfect as the face of Hedy Lamarr.

Purists may object to such deceiving devices which, they say, tend to build up a sub-average singer into a great star. But audiences won't be fooled; they know the singers from radio and recordings, where such acoustic tricks are not being practiced. Basically, the soundmen perform the same embellishing process that is being undertaken so successfully by make-up experts, hairdressers, designers, and cameramen. By now the awful truth must have oozed out that some of our glamor queens are not *quite* as beautiful as they appear on the screen.

"It's the illusion of perfection that makes some 56,000,000 customers buy movie tickets week after week," they say in Hollywood.



Illustrated by William G. Meek

Realism is hardly the keynote in movie stories and characterization—why should it be in make-up and sound?

Fortunately the soundmen cannot make a Lauritz Melchior out of Wallace Beery, any more than make-up experts could turn you-know-whom into Ingrid Bergman. The sound people can do a lot of tricks, but they cannot give a singer "personality" if he lacks it.

When Bob Hope sang Thanks for the Memory in the picture that was titled after the song, the sound experts came to the reluctant conclusion that as a singer Mr. Hope wasn't his usual sparkling self. They changed frequencies, "repunctuated" the melody, doctored up Hope's vocal expression—and came up with such a terrific version of the song that it became the theme song on Hope's radio show and is now identified with him the world over. (This bit of information should please Mr. Crosby, whose horses have been the butt of Hope's jokes for years. Crosby may have his horses, but Hope has his voice.)

Hollywood caught up with the intricacies of sound only around 1930. In that year one of the first successful experiments with diversified sounds was made in connection with Jesse Lasky's The Virginian. There were magnificent long shots of cattle herds such as had never been seen before; and as the herds approached the camera, the subdued sounds increased in range and intensity until the din was deafening. It should have worked out beautifully, but somehow it didn't. When the picture was sneak-previewed, the desired effect didn't come off.

◆ Mr. Lasky and his sound crew took the film back into their laboratories and began to "reverse" the emphasis of the sound effects. Now the din of the cattle herds was loudest during the long shots, while the camera was taking in the magnitude of the whole scene. As the herds approached, the over-all din was tuned down gradually and the emphasis switched to the shouting voices of the cowboys. In the close-ups, people were talking audibly, and the cattle noises were nothing but a muted acoustic background.

At the next sneak preview the audience reacted spontaneously to the "reversed sound perspective." It wasn't the way it would have sounded in reality, but, strangely enough, it sounded "more real."

Today this technique has been universally accepted. The balance of sound is changed all the time by the dubbing mixers, though you won't notice it. (You would notice it, however, if the balance hadn't been corrected.) As a singer moves *away* from the camera, reverberations, other voices, and extraneous noises are brought in.

The soundmen have come a long way by trial and error. They remember The Milky Way, which showed Harold Lloyd as a prize-fighter taking terrific punishment before he wins his fight. It was easy to dub in the sound of the crushing blows. Harold Lloyd was taking it right and left. But though the scene was supposed to be sure comedy, the audience didn't laugh.

After the showing, Harold Lloyd accused the sound department point blank of having ruined the picture. "It's all wrong. The audience want the other guy to get hurt, but they won't stand my taking such a beating. Those thumping sounds on the jaw are swell—on the other feller. But you have to take the noise out of the blows when I am on the receiving end."

The sound department took out all noises of Harold Lloyd's getting socked. The picture was a riot. It taught the sound engineers something about mass psychology.

◆ Today the big studios have sound-film libraries with tens of thousands of classified noises. At one studio they have 27 different kinds of cow moos, and twice as many sorts of winds and thunders. The best thunder is produced by bending and shaking panels of metal sheet; wind cannot be recorded—the wind pressure only pushes against the diaphragm of the microphone; it has to be produced artificially by a machine which whirls wooden rods around until they start to whistle.

The sound engineers have analyzed many thousands of crowd noises. They can tell by the sound whether they are listening to a baseball, football, or horse-racing crowd. During a baseball game the only sounds recorded immediately after a play are cheers; for some reason the booing side voices its displeasure somewhat later. At a football game there is practically no audible disapproval: the winning side cheers, and the other people just keep quiet. At the races most of the yelling is done by the unhappy losers who shout *against* the winning horse—not, as one would expect, by the lucky people whose horse is in the lead.

The sound of a dive bomber is never recorded the way it occurs because the ascent of the plane, after it has almost touched the ground, sounds anticlimactic. So the dubbing mixers take the actual dive, and follow it up with a reverse sound track of the dive while the plane goes up again.

In The Devil and the Deep the sound people had to create the noise of a submarine hitting a freighter under water. They tried hundreds of effects, including the sound of a submarine hitting a freighter under water (which was just like a piece of soap falling into a bathtub), until they found the sound recording of a man with false teeth being hit hard on the jaw. They amplified the sound, changed its frequency, and "stretched" it from the actual length of one tenth of a second to nearly one minute. When the sound-recorded victim had been hit, the sharp crack of his teeth being ground together sounded as though the first plates of the freighter had broken away. The man's plate rocked, and this peculiar noise, after being slowed down and amplified, became the noise of water gushing into the hull of the freighter. Then the man closed his mouth again and this part of the sound effect became the twisting and grinding of the submarine's bow in the hull of the freighter.

◆ Millions of people came home from The Lost Weekend with the weird alcoholic tremolo which accompanies Ray Milland's alcoholic nightmares ringing in their heads. The soundmen used an oscillator with pure tones, without harmonics, and created the tremolo effect by rapidly changing its speed.

From such supernatural noises it's a long way to a two-month-old baby singing a song. In Bedtime Story the soundmen recorded the cooing and gurgling of a baby (which had hardly any inflection), changed the pitch, sped up and slowed down the sound track, and created a set of "notes" which they synchronized with music. The effect was so startling that hundreds of people wrote in asking who'd taught the baby "to sing." After listening to Bing Crosby in The Emperor Waltz, a lot of people will probably ask how come that on a walk through the mountains his singing comes back, by way of an echo, in perfect chords! No real echo could possibly do that, but

(Continued on page 34)

Why I know

reading time 14 minutes

◆ My search began one morning in April, more than 50 years ago, when my colored nurse led me to the door of a gray stone chapel at Twenty-third Street and Guilford Avenue in Baltimore. Welcoming me inside, a Sunday-school teacher explained that I was now in God's house.

"Whereabouts," I asked, "is God?"

"He," the lady assured me, "is everywhere."

But I wanted Him to be somewhere. Like the little girl in the fable, I did not want Him to be invisible; I wanted Him "with skin on." That was why I peeked under the pew and in a broom closet, only to be rescued finally, weeping and dusty, from behind the pipe organ.

Thus began my quest, and through half a century I never entirely abandoned it. Even in boyhood, the reality or nonreality of the Creator seemed to me the most important matter in life, and to this day I cannot understand how an intelligent person can think otherwise. It is the one supreme matter on which a man has to be sure, for every decision he makes hinges upon it.

But can anyone really know? Lanland said: "I have swept the heavens with my telescope and have not found God," while other scientists testify: "We have examined the brain with our microscopes and have not found the soul."

Yet every day I speak the words of the ancient creed:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth—"

I recite it all because I believe it all, though earnest friends accuse me of credulity: "You can't really know, now, can you?"

My friends, who are earnest doubters and of genuine good will, demand to know how anyone can ever prove that God exists. To that question there are two answers—two keys to the most exciting mystery of life.

The first way is by sheer reason, through the brain. That was my first way. Surely, I told myself, if logic is a science, then the existence of God should be proved or disproved scientifically. I knew that physicists had often established beyond dispute the reality of things which could neither be seen nor heard nor ever known by other senses. Has any eye ever seen an atom? Yet the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki know its terrible actuality. Again, all the billions upon billions of genes in the world could be contained in one child's thimble. Beyond vision or touch, these particles had nevertheless been demonstrated; they existed, reservoirs of incredible power.

◆ Every high-school student knows how once upon a time an astronomer discovered a star without ever having looked upon it. So exact was his knowledge of stellar mathematics that he calculated—he did not have to believe; he knew—that there must be another planet in our solar system or else the whole celestial circus would fly apart. When larger telescopes were built, astronomers did actually see that star. But it had already been discovered by sheer reason. So, through the mechanism of the intellect, our Father in heaven also clearly reveals Himself to the logical mind. You don't have to be a scholar and follow the profundities of St. Thomas Aquinas to find this for yourself. A most readable book by John A. O'Brien, The Truths Men Live By, will give you scientific, logical proofs.

But I preferred firsthand knowledge. While it was possible, I told myself, for a man to read a textbook on swimming and come to know aquatics thoroughly, I would rather plunge in a pool and swim. We all exult in the joy of experience, free motion, the splendor of survival in another element.

That is the second way to know God—by personal experience. That was my second way.

In search for truth, I had already explored in many different fields. A study of comparative religions over a decade of years led me from Buddhism, and its Western translation called Theosophy, all the way to Bahaism and Zoroastrianism, with many steps between. As a reporter for the Baltimore American, I had attended annual conferences of Methodists, diocesan meetings of Episcopalians, conventions of Baptists, synods of Presbyterians; and for three months I "covered" evangelistic meetings of Billy Sunday. I was drenched with doctrine. I had even waited for specters in darkroom séances of spiritualist mediums. Out of all this I emerged, at the age of 30, a self-styled agnostic. In those days I considered myself a liberal person, emancipated from superstition, although still genially loyal to ethical values—when they did not interfere too much with what I wanted to do.

I declared that I believed in live and let live. Circumstances, I felt, altered not some cases, but all. There were no absolutes. No more right or wrong. And, for me, no authority and no revelation. Certainly no supernaturalism. All these things were anathema to my emancipated and rational mind. I couldn't be like Christ, I told myself; I would just be myself.

Such tolerance and emancipation and what I considered common sense and good will, should have brought me happiness, but did not. Nor did they bring happiness to anyone I knew. Most of my friends

there is a God

By FULTON OURSLER

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Oursler is the author of the radio program, The Greatest Story Ever Told, and for eleven years was Editor in Chief of Liberty. He is, moreover, a playwright of note, the author of many distinguished stories and articles, and presently Senior Editor of the Reader's Digest.]

felt as I did; none of us better or worse than the other, I suppose; all very independent and self-reliant and disdainful of the old-fashioned faith of our fathers. We all had a great deal of amusement, too, but somehow our hilarities left us dispirited. No pleasure was ever permanently satisfying. Instead, we all had an inner restlessness of disappointment and discontent.

This inner sulkiness and depression had nothing to do with material success. Among my friends were some who had fame and money. But nothing was ever enough. When they got what they wanted, they didn't want it. They haunted doctors and psychiatrists and other currently popular yogis, without reward. The world in which they lived was a world of self-pity, self-justification, alibis, envy, jealousies, greeds, fears, resentments, grudges, and hatreds. They were all trying to escape from themselves. Today was never good enough, but tomorrow they hoped would be better. I say they, but I mean we. Someone aptly described us as people without invisible means of support.

Today there are 8,000,000 American men and women with similar ideas who are under mental care. There will be, psychiatrists tell us, 10,000,000 more in a year or so, people who find the burden of life too much for them. The brain rebels and seeks escape in insane fantasies.

◆ I shall be forever grateful that I found my way out. It is not easy to tell how this happened; I cannot bring myself to open private scars to public gaze. But you remember the true story of the illustrious refugee at Lourdes, a famous liberal writer who, with his wife, had slipped through the Nazi frontier. They were working their way southward from Germany through France, the Gestapo at their heels. Capture meant the concentration camp or worse. Their hope was to cross the border and sail for the United States, but Spanish officials barred their way. Bribes and entreaty alike failed; they were turned back and had to find a lodging in Lourdes. On his first night in the little town in the Pyrenees, the fugitive writer stood in front of the famous shrine and made an infidel's prayer, a cry from the heart.

"I do not believe," he said in effect, "and I must be honest and say so. But my danger is great and in my extremity, on the chance that God might, after all, be real, I ask for help. See us safely across the barrier, and I promise that when I get to the United States, I will write the story of this place for all the world to read."

Having finished his prayer, he returned to his hotel. Never, he told me later, had he known a calm so deep; it was a pure peace reaching him from beyond; he had touched something beyond the prison of the five senses.

Strange as it sounds, Franz Werfel and his wife got through within the week. The first thing he did, once safe in our land, was to write The Song of Bernadette. No finer tribute to faith ever was penned than the story written by the refugee. In the terror of his plight he came to know God and thereafter never lost the sense of His presence.

Now, something akin to that happened to me. It was nothing so spectacular as a flight from Hitler's agents, but within my modest sphere I, too, felt surrounded and in danger and afraid. My agnostic self-reliance was no longer helpful when real trouble came and littered on my doorstep. Not only I, but those nearest and dearest to me were in trouble with me; I really needed God's help. Yet even then, I could not, as an intelligent man, command myself to believe or pretend to obey —for a man is a fool who tries to deceive either God or himself. The most that I could say was that I wished I *could* believe.

And that was enough!

The principle is illustrated in the Holman Hunt painting of Christ, a lantern in His hand, standing at a closed door: "Behold I stand at the door and knock!" A critic twitted the artist about a mistake in the picture—there was no handle on the door. "There can be no handle on the outside," Hunt replied. "The door can only be opened by the

(Continued on page 54)

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REALTOR
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NEW YORK, N. Y.

The man from liberty street

By PAUL MacNAMARA

Illustrated by Paul Orban

Liberty Short Short • reading time 12 minutes

◆ This story first turned up in Stockholm, back in early 1940. Now, nine years later, it is being told again in Paris with hardly a word changed.

No one knows where it started or who told it first.

At least there is one thing all versions agree on, and that's the date. It was the day after Henderson, the British Ambassador to Germany, left Berchtesgaden for London for the last time.

That would be the end of August, 1939. The whole business took place in less than twenty minutes at Hitler's eerie "Eagle's Nest" on that fateful day.

Eagle's Nest, as you probably know, is a fantastic place perched on the top of Kehlstein, a queer towerlike rock formation eighteen hundred feet high in the Bavarian mountains not far from Berchtesgaden, Hitler's country home. The main room was huge, glass-enclosed on three sides, giving a tremendous airplane view of the surrounding mountains. It was probably designed for the Nazi Party's and Adolf Hitler's personal shrine. On Hitler's desk in the great room used to lie the famous Wotan's Hand.

The story goes that one day, when the place was being built, Hitler stumbled on the curious piece of rock shaped exactly like a giant human hand. It fascinated him and he had it mounted in a glass case and explained to visitors that it was the hand of the German god of war. He was known to be greatly attached to it and believed it to be the symbol of good luck.

One thing more, important to the story, is that all who saw Eagle's Nest in its palmier days agreed it was unquestionably one of the most inaccessible houses in the world and certainly one of the most closely guarded.

So much for background.

The story—

Late in the afternoon of the fateful day, there were gathered together in the glass-enclosed room the top members of the Nazi Party and the German General Staff. It was the final meeting before the invasion of Poland and the beginning of World War II.

Twenty-odd men were present, including Göring, Hess, Göbbels, Himmler, and Von Ribbentrop.

The men were gathered in front of a gigantic mounted map of Europe. Hitler was sitting on the edge of his desk, one hand resting on the glass case enclosing the famous Wotan's Hand.

Herr von Britch, foremost meteorologist in the world, was reading his report and prophecy on the weather for the coming weeks in Europe. The report was good. It would be dry, the Panzers would roll easily.

Suddenly—and to this day no one knows how he could have gaine
admission into that impregnabl
mountain retreat—a man appeare
at Hitler's side.

He was tall and thin and his hai
was snow white. He wore nos
glasses attached to a wide blac
ribbon. In his buttonhole he wor
a white carnation.

"Are you Hitler?"

His sudden appearance stunne
the room, but when he spoke, i
roared into action. Officers lunge
toward him. Himmler screamed
"Mueller, damn you!" (Muelle
was captain of the SS. Guards i
charge of guarding Hitler.) Th
room was in a panic. Somewhere
siren began to whine.

Hitler held up his hand. "Wait.

The stranger was smiling. H
seemed unconcerned at the com
motion he had caused. He had take
off his glasses and was polishin
them with his handkerchief. "Sorr
if I interrupted, but I heard tha
you gentlemen were interested i
acquiring some real estate and
thought I might help."

Himmler had drawn his Luge
and was pointing it at the man'
heart. "How did you get in her
and who are you?"

Hitler pushed the pistol to on
side. "Acquire real estate—what d
you mean?"

The stranger began to polish hi
glasses again.

"I have heard the complain
many, many times in Germany
that forty-six million Englishme
rule forty million kilometers, whil
eighty-five million Germans rul
only half a million square kilo
meters. I have heard you make thi
complaint yourself, Herr Hitler."

The stranger continued, "It wa
my understanding that this meet
ing today has to do with this dis
crepancy. Isn't that right?"

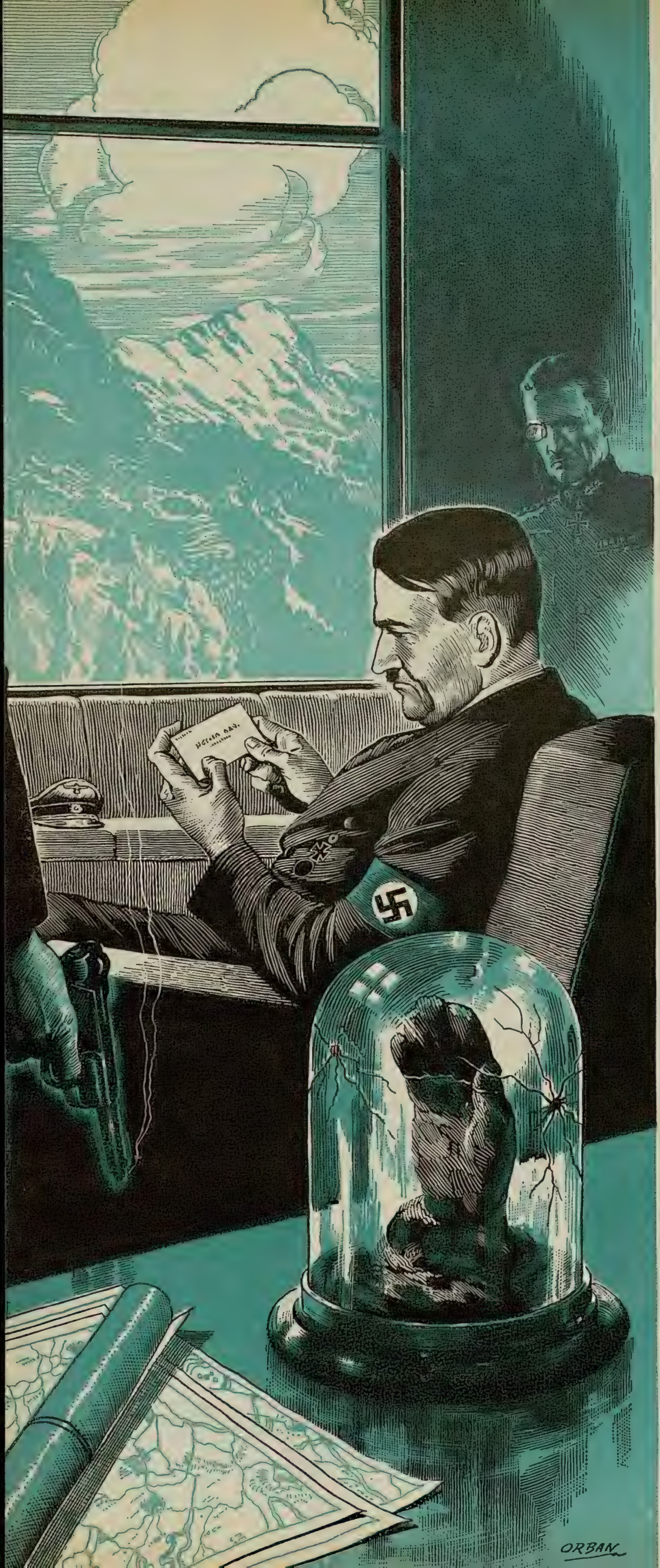
As the man talked, Hitler stoo
looking at him, with his feet apar
cradling his elbow in one hand an
stroking his mustache reflectivel
The man seemed to have him unde
a spell. He nodded slowly. "It
true. We are interested in *Lebens
raum* for the German people. Bu
tell me, what is it to you?"

The man was straightening th
handkerchief in his breast pocke
"Because I think I can get it fo
you, and at a lower price than yo
will otherwise have to pay."

Von Ribbentrop sneere
"Wholesale, no doubt."

The man ignored him.

"Tell me exactly what you wa
—how many square kilometer



◀ *Hitler slumped into a chair, turning the little white card over and over in his hands*

how much oil, how much steel and coal—everything. Then I will tell you what I think the price will be that you will have to pay. If the price you give is lower than I think I can get it for you, why," the man shrugged, "then I'm wrong. Forget the whole thing."

He took a few steps toward a portable blackboard being used by meteorologist Von Britch. "May I use this?" Hitler nodded.

He drew a double white line down the middle. On one side he wrote, "Wanted by Germany," then turned to the room. "If I put it all down in black and white, I think you will see how simple it is."

He began to write—"1 million ten-acre farms outside of the present German borders"; then wrote after it, in small letters, "Land must be productive and fertile." He turned to the room. "Would that be enough new farmland to satisfy the question of living space?"

Hitler imperceptibly nodded his head. The rest of the room was silent.

Then he wrote, "Iron and Steel—twice again the amount now available in your Saar Basin." He turned to the room. "O.K.?" The room was silent.

"Hydraulic Power"—the scratch of the chalk was the only sound in the room—"twice the capacity of Niagara Falls." The men stared silently and the list grew.

"Oil," "Aluminum," "Wheat," and so on until there was nothing left he could think of.

"Well, gentlemen, I must say you really have quite an order here. Now, then, the next question is what are you prepared to pay?"

Göring spoke for the first time. "Pay, you fool! Who said anything about paying? We are taking only what rightfully belongs to us, the master race! *Heil* Hitler!"

The stranger smiled. "Perhaps you are right, Herr Göring, but the cost of—shall we say—collecting will be something."

The man stepped to the blackboard again and on the other side of the double line he had previously

IT ONLY SOUNDS THAT WAY

Continued from page 29

listeners will agree that the sound experts have improved on nature.

◆ A big studio's sound department is a complex organization. While a film is being shot, the mike picks up only dialogue and a few minor sounds—footsteps or the closing of a window. All other sounds are put in later. After the film has been edited, a rough cut of the picture is run for producer, director, composer, and members of the sound department, and it is decided what kind of sounds shall be added.

Parlor and bedroom scenes seldom raise any baffling problems, but when a picture goes out into the wide-open spaces where the scope of sounds changes all the time, the going gets very tough for the sound engineers. In a Cecil B. De Mille outdoor epic with its variety of voices, animal sounds, storms, fights, chases, there may be as many as 20 separate sound tracks that have to be blended into a final composite sound track not more than .084 of an inch wide.

At sneak previews, two members of the sound department are always present. If a comedy is being shown, one of the sound department's functions is to measure the percentage of laughs. One of the purposes of the "laugh chart" is to adjust the volume of the actors' voices. Frequently there are explosive salvos of laughter where none was expected. In that case the volume of the dialogue immediately following the laugh line must be stepped up, so the actors can be heard.

Of late, the sound engineers have ventured into the much discussed field of audience research. Most big companies have their new pictures tested by hand-picked cross-section audiences with the help of various electric gadgets.

At the Paramount sound department the soundmen pull inconspicuous slip covers over the back of the theater seats, which are wired to a central machine. The slip covers measure people's emotion—or their boredom—by their breathing rate. The sound engineers claim that this method is infallible because the "victims" do not know that they are being tested.

There are about 700 soundmen in Hollywood who are members of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers. Among them are three whom Providence saw fit to name H. C. Silent, G. F. Rackett, and J. Noise. On that note, we will cut and run in. ◆◆

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drawn he wrote another head: "Cost —to Germany."

"Now, then, let me list some of the costs if you take it by force of arms." He picked up the chalk.

"It will take at least three, maybe four—possibly five years of war to collect all of this." He pointed to the first line. "Now, then, that will mean five, six, perhaps seven million men—*Germans,* who will have to lay down their lives to accomplish the collection of what you say belongs to you. Let's say six million to be conservative." He wrote it down: "Six million Germans," then in parentheses he added, "(dead)."

Underneath he wrote, "Planes." "How many, Herr Göring, are you prepared to throw into it? Two hundred thousand—three hundred thousand—four hundred thousand war planes? Let's say three hundred thousand." And the list began to grow: Tanks, Guns, Halftracks, Oil, Submarines—on and on until the list of arms and armament filled the board.

"Now, then, let's reduce it all to marks. Take the first item of six million dead Germans—soldiers. There must be some price the families of these men would pay if their men were to be allowed to live. Let's be conservative—say five thousand marks from each family. That would be thirty billion marks right there." He wrote, "30 billion" opposite the item "6 million men."

Opposite "Planes" he wrote, "450 billion," and on down the list—"400 billion, 300 billion, 250 billion, 100 billion"—until opposite each item was its value in marks.

Under the last item he drew a line and added up the list. It came to an unbelievable figure running into quintillions of marks.

◆ He put the chalk in the tray and wiped the dust from his hands and turned to face the room. "That, gentlemen, is what you are prepared to pay at this moment for what you want, and the chances are the price will be higher. For some reason, prices always are higher in a war."

He turned and pointed to the first list he had made. "Commission me to go out and buy these things that you want. I am sure I can get them all for you for this staggering amount of money that you say you are prepared to spend. Besides, I'll have something left over. All you have to do is say go ahead.

"For example, in Poland and the Ukraine there must be many farmers who would be willing to sell their land at the high prices I could pay with the vast amounts of money you are prepared to spend. It will take some time, but no longer than it will to fight a war.

"Land in Africa is cheap and very rich. No doubt I can get many fine farms there at even lower prices."

Hitler was silent and the man continued: "As for coal and iron, I am fairly sure the Czechs would sell a part of their holdings, particularly at the high prices you can apparently afford to pay. The same is true of hydraulic power.

"Remember, it won't be the first time a country has bought great land riches with money. Where I come from we once bought several hundred thousand square miles for seven million dollars—less by far than you will put into fighter planes for one month, Herr Göring. I am speaking of Alaska, of course.

◆ "Well, gentlemen, what do you say? Why not roll up your war maps? Believe me, I can get it for you easier and cheaper. It may take a little time, but, as I said, not so long as a war will take. And besides, with my plan you will get what you want, while with yours the chances are you won't. Oh, yes, and another thing. With my plan I said you will have something left over—I was referring to the six million German soldiers that you won't have if you do it your way." He paused. "Well, Herr Hitler, what do you say?"

Himmler's finger tightened on the trigger of his pistol. For a minute the room was filled with smoke and the vibration of the shot.

"I take it your answer to my suggestion is no. I'm sorry, because I think you will regret it."

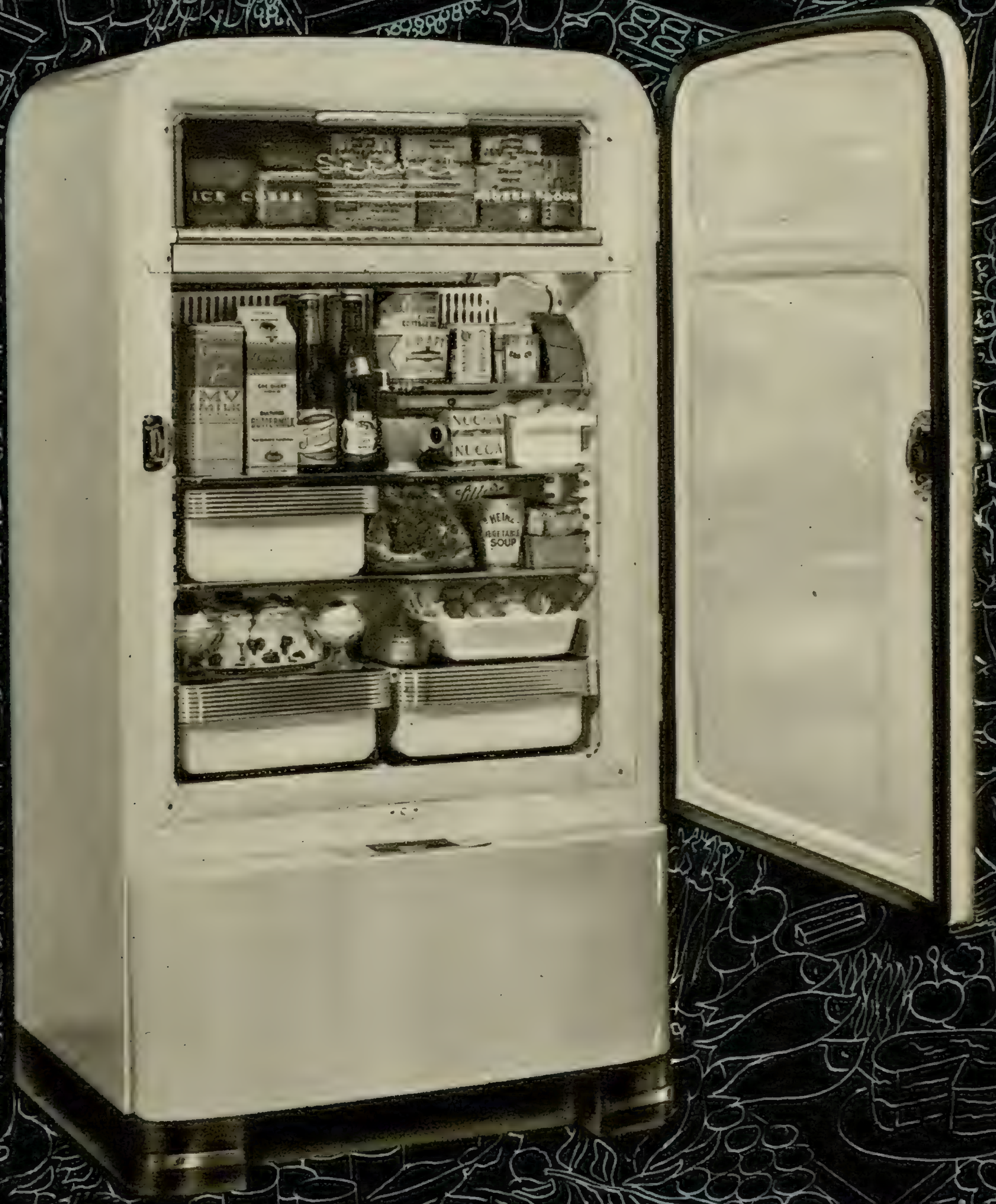
The smoke cleared, but the stranger had disappeared. Yet Himmler's pistol couldn't have been more than six feet from him when he had pulled the trigger.

Göbbels limped over to pick up something on the floor where the man had been standing. It was a small white business card. He read it slowly, out loud: "Joseph P. Day, Realtor, 67 Liberty Street, New York City." When he finished, he handed it to Hitler, whose hand was outstretched for it.

Von Ribbentrop repeated the name, "Joseph P. Day. That's exactly who that was. I remember seeing his picture not long ago in Time magazine."

As he read, Hitler slumped into a chair, turning the little white card over and over in his hands. Somehow he seemed to have lost interest in what Von Britch was saying. He was looking reflectively out the window. If he had looked at the glass case at his elbow containing Wotan's Hand, he would have been shocked to see that Himmler's shot had cracked the great stone hand directly across the knuckles. ◆◆

Liberty home

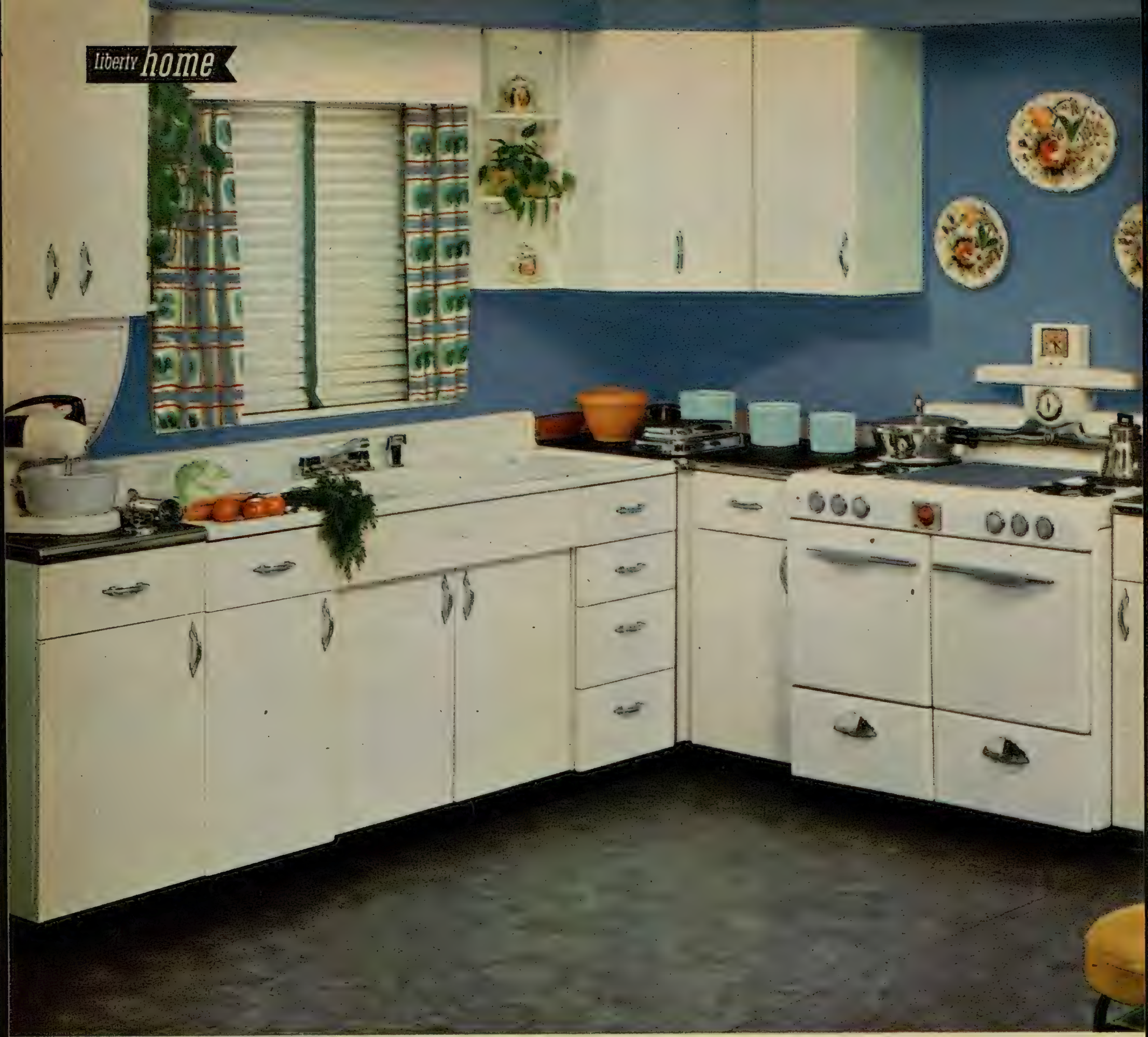


here's what a scientifically stocked refrigerator looks like

HOW TO STOCK YOUR REFRIGERATOR

◆ There's many a family-favorite meal stocked in this modern refrigerator—and the food stays at its nutritional, market-fresh peak if you heed a few sensible rules. DO refrigerate all dairy products at once; they're highly perishable. DO wrap loosely fresh meats and butter, and cover left-overs or opened cans to prevent their drying out, exchanging odors, and losing vitamin content to air exposure. DO wash and trim vegetables before storing in the crisper's moist cold, but DON'T pack too tightly, or they'll bruise. DON'T refreeze frozen foods once they've thawed. DON'T forget that frozen fruits (with high sugar content) and ice cream (with high air content) require the very coldest spot in the freezer locker. DON'T overload—it impedes the air circulation needed for good refrigerator operation.

Courtesy Servel Gas Refrigerator.



ASK-THE-MAN KITCHEN

Don't let The Man ask you, "Can't this house be run on a businesslike basis?" Instead, ask him, "Why not operate your office as well as I run this kitchen?"

◆ Yes—ask The Man. Or rather, show him. Show him how much you both can learn about time and motion saving from Liberty's kitchen. This kitchen wraps up new equipment (for who-makes-it information, see page 37; for how-much, see page 43) with results of the latest kitchen-planning studies. To trim the package, we offer a many-purpose linoleum-top table that The Man can put together at home. You can adopt all of this marvel if you're building; almost all if you're remodeling. Best of all, with little or no expense, you can borrow a good share of its efficiency for your present castle.

These studies we've mentioned indicate that you just about double the efficiency and convenience of the three major kitchen centers—range, sink, and refrigerator—when you surround them with ample working surfaces and storage cabinets. The closer together these

three major units are placed, the fewer wasted steps and minutes, and the more room for a household office, hobby corner, or breakfast bar. Since the major traffic (that's you, scurrying around the room) is between range and refrigerator, their proximity is important. And the more food and equipment at hand near the appliance where work starts, the speedier the meal preparation, serving, and clean-up.

If you're an about-to-build family, decide

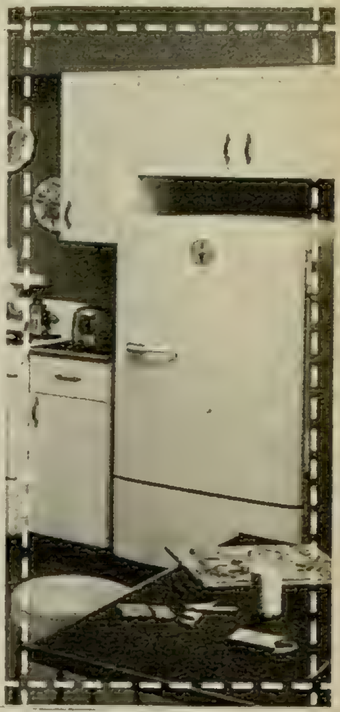
(Continued on page 43)

READER SERVICE BULLETINS

How to Buy Kitchen Pots and Pans..............3 cents
How to Make Liberty's Multi-Purpose Kitchen Table.3 cents

Send this order blank to Home Editor, Liberty Magazine, 37 West 57th Street, New York 19, N. Y. Please enclose stamps.

AT THE REFRIGERATOR UNIT it's convenient to have about 36 inches of working surface; 36 inches each of base and wall cabinet space. STORE HERE perishable foods, in refrigerator, of course; baking ingredients and prepared mixes, sandwich fillings, syrups, sugars, honey, cocoa, tapioca, nuts, raisins, salad-dressing makings, breads and cereals, shortening, canned fruit and juice, prepared cereals, herbs and garnishes. KEEP ON HAND electric mixer, cake, pie, and loaf tins, baking sheet, sifter, casseroles, knives, corer, spatula, shredder, can opener, pastry brush, mixing bowls and spoons, rolling pin, measuring cups, refrigerator dishes and covers, salad bowl and plates, dessert dishes, trays, relish dishes, pitchers. HERE YOU'LL mix batters and doughs, dressings and fillings; make salads and sandwiches; chill fruits, juices, desserts, and salads; garnish roasts, vegetables, casseroles before serving; assemble milk, butter, chilled desserts and salads before serving; put away left-overs, defrost refrigerator.



AT THE SINK UNIT it's convenient to have undersink cabinet, about 18 inches of base cabinet space, preferably with drawers, 18 inches of working surface on each side of sink. STORE HERE potatoes, yams, onions, rice, gelatin, dried fruits and vegetables. KEEP ON HAND saucepans, coffee maker, double boiler, water pitcher, sieve, gelatin molds, mixing bowls, food grinder, service tray, hand and dish towels, dish rack, garbage bags and can, wastebasket. HERE YOU'LL wash, pare or scrape vegetables and fruits; soak dried fruits, lentils, and gelatin; run water for beverages and vegetables; drain cooked foods; soak, wash, and rinse dishes.

AT THE RANGE UNIT it's convenient to have about 18 inches of working surface plus top-of-stove; about 18 inches each of wall and base cabinet space. STORE HERE macaroni and spaghetti, raw cereal, prepared puddings, canned vegetables and soups, coffee and tea, gelatin, condiments and spices. KEEP ON HAND skillets, roaster, griddle, fryer, saucepans, platters, gravy and vegetable bowls, cake rack and plate, absorbent paper, sharp knives, tongs, hot-pan holders, can opener, thermometers, measuring spoons, salt and pepper shakers. HERE YOU'LL cook, bake, broil, and stew meats, vegetables, pastries, and casseroles; heat water for beverages and cereals; heat canned and left-over foods; season foods; assemble foods to serve or to store.

Refrigerator—Servel • Range—Magic Chef • Sink and cabinets—Youngstown • "Marbletone" linoleum—Sloane-Blabon • "Power Chef" mixer with food-grinder attachment—Dormeyer • Sandwich grill with waffle grids—Westinghouse • Plastic canisters, vacuum party bowl—Tupper • "Fry-Master" pressure cooker—National Pressure Cooker • Stove-top protector—Rubbermaid • Percolator—Wear-Ever • Automatic toaster—Proctor • Kitchen Stool—Lloyd • Linoleum-top table—Youngstown—available in lengths from 33 inches up. For directions on making your own table with this top, see Reader Service Bulletin offered here.

PAY-FOR-ITSELF LAUNDRY

Here's lots of sense—and dollars!—in Liberty's laundry-hobby room, where 1949 equipment and 1949 ideas meet. After remodeling the kitchen, your logical next step is an adjoining laundry

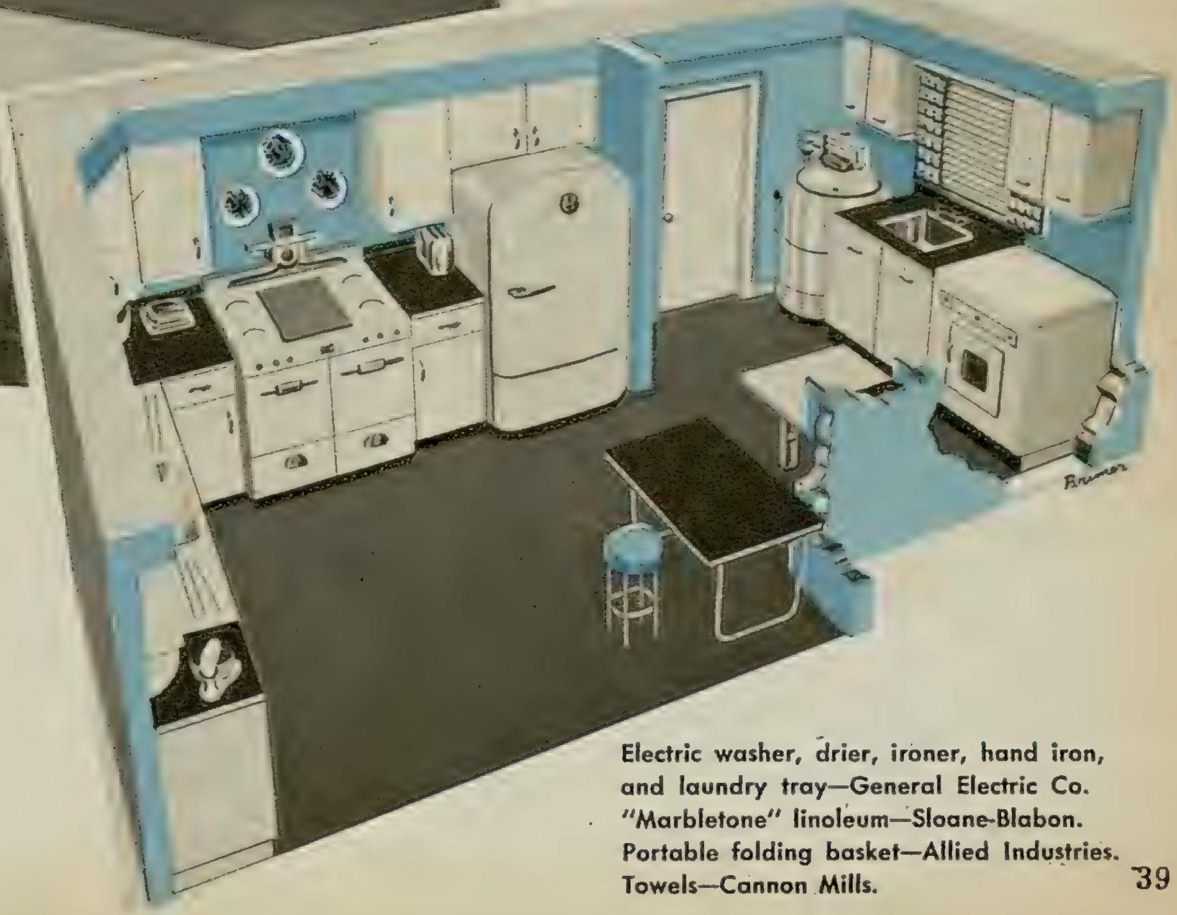
◆ Perhaps it's an old pantry, no longer needed since you have enough storage space in the kitchen Perhaps it's one end of a formerly oversized kitchen, now reduced to efficient working proportions; or a waste-space entryway. After all, only tradition (probably started because the first mechanical laundry equipment was noted for bad looks as well as for its ingenuity) claims a proper laundry must be relegated to the basement.

But houses, machines, and families change. More homes are built now minus a basement but with utility rooms alongside the kitchen. New appliances are handsome enough to be shown off, not hidden. A laundry near the kitchen cuts plumbing costs; it's lighter, more cheerful when on the main floor. Washing isn't a chore when you can watch youngsters inside or out; needn't trudge up and down stairs, and aren't shut off from the family.

Such a laundry needn't be large (washer, laundry tray, drier, portable ironer can be installed in less than 60 square feet), nor is it a luxury. Our equipment costs about $550 to $600, depending on your section of the country. This cost can probably be included in a bank loan for remodeling and paid off on easy monthly terms. If you own some equipment now—say a washer—the cost is that much less. Adding up savings on weekly laundry bills and on seasonal extras such as blankets and curtains, and better care for

(Continued on page 43)

Cut away one wall—this is what you'll see ▶ in our adjoining kitchen and laundry.



Electric washer, drier, ironer, hand iron, and laundry tray—General Electric Co. "Marbletone" linoleum—Sloane-Blabon. Portable folding basket—Allied Industries. Towels—Cannon Mills.

READER SERVICE BULLETINS

Laundering Guides (4 leaflets)........3 cents
How to Make Built-in Clothes Hamper, and Hobby Shelves-Ironer Table.....3 cents
Send this order blank to Home Editor, Liberty Magazine, 37 West 57th Street, New York 19, New York. Please enclose stamps.

SALADS MEN LIKE from Liberty's Home Kitchen

◆ Pictured above are the makings for fresh crisp green salads everybody goes for. Use a lavish hand with the golden salad oil; a sparing one with the vinegars. Experiment with the seasonings to create a salad husbands eat with gusto.

Ask any man! He'll tell you pronto there's only ONE salad that's fit to eat: a tossed green salad with the right dressing. But such greens! Washed crisp enough to crackle like newly minted bills, chilled enough to snap like a cold spell, and torn enough for easy handling with a fork. For tasty salad dressings, see recipes on page 43.

READER SERVICE BULLETIN: For your copy of Delectable Salads and Salad Dressings, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Home Editor, Liberty Magazine, 37 West 57th Street, New York 19, N. Y.

Myrtle-wood salad bowl and accessories, Post Mart, New York, N. Y.

Liberty *home*

CHEESE AROUND THE WORLD

From Canada to South America, across the ocean and back, cheese devotees find their favorites

By BEULAH KARNEY

◆ During Lent it will stand you in good stead to learn about cheese. If you cook for a meat-and-potato man, you can rely on it that he will like cheese. And if you just have enough winning cheese ideas tucked inside that cooking corner of your brain, you are pretty certain to rate a kiss or two, as did Mlle. Marie Harel of Camembert, France, when Napoleon found her cheese tasty.

Far be it from me to point out there is little work attached to serving cheese for dessert. But it does go great with any vegetable plate; or with that so familiar Lenten supper, creamed tuna, or any sea food, with or without mushrooms, served on buttered noodles, with an Italian salad, hard rolls, topped off with an epicure's selection of cheese, especially nice served with fresh fruit segments of peeled grapefruit and orange or wedges of chilled pineapple.

If Camembert is among the selection, and well it might be, remember to take it out of the refrigerator some time before serving, so it will be soft.

Brie is another soft cheese you will want to consider for your tray, and quite a lusty number it is. They wrote about *Fromage de Brie* before Columbus landed.

Neufchâtel is still another of those soft "unripened" cream cheeses, but not quite so rich, being made of whole or partially skimmed milk and cream.

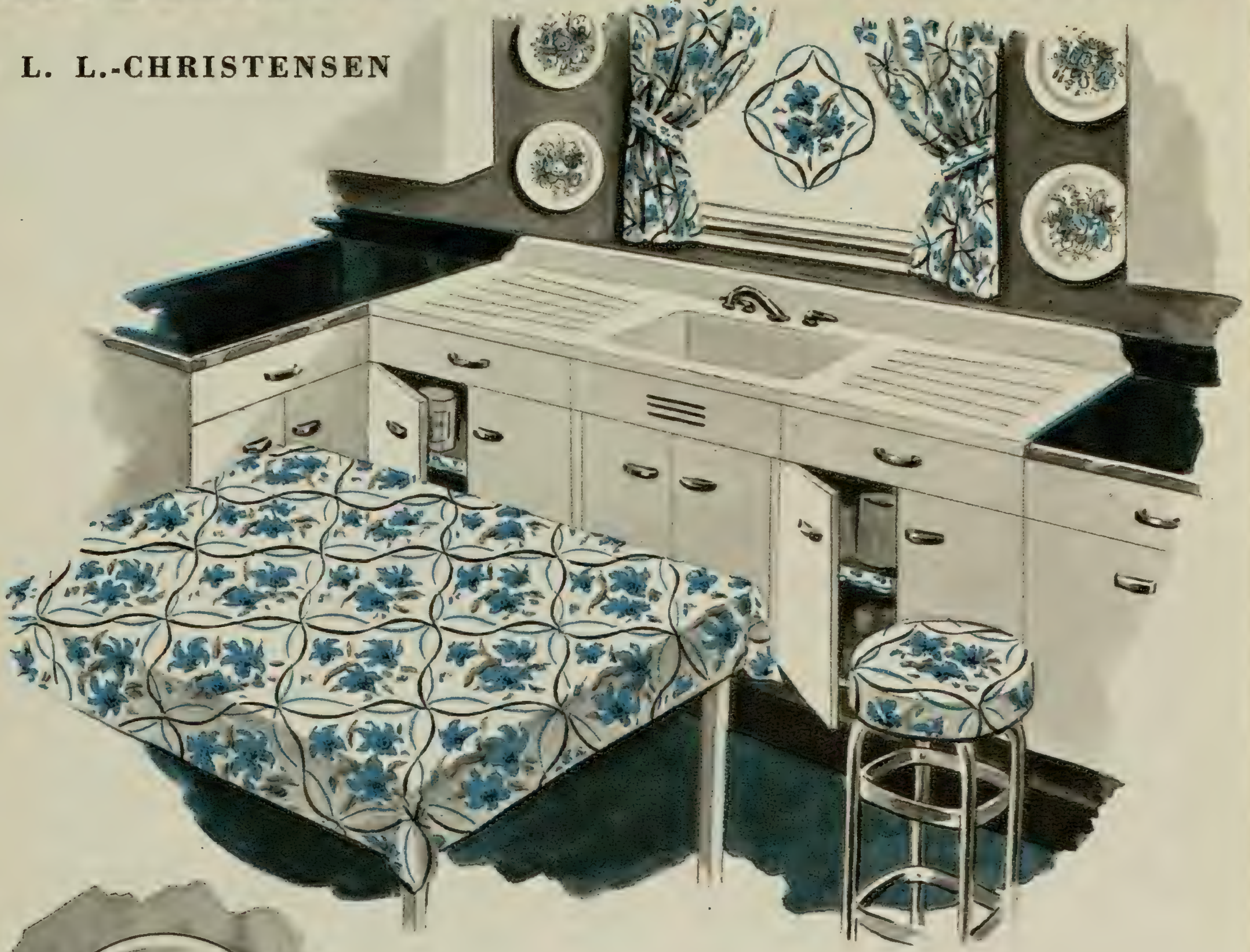
Cheese connoisseurs will want you to include wedges of Roquefort for that dessert tray. Pears are particularly fine with Roquefort. The original French Roquefort was made from sheep's milk and ripened in the famous cave by the same name on the Cevennes uplands in France. It has those distinctive blue-green veins made by "penicillium roqueforti," a "friendly bacteria," which they tell me gives it its flavor. Cheese makers also tell me that during the ripening period the cheese is pierced with needles to introduce air into the center to "coax" the mold development.

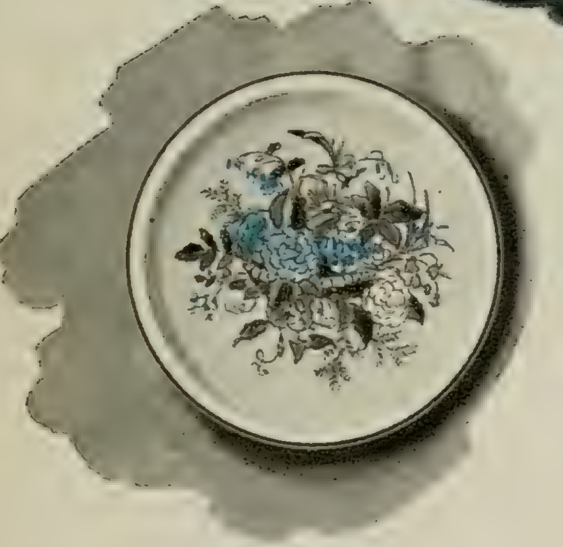
The Danes also make a blue cheese, and so do the English–Stilton. The Italians have a similar one–Gorgonzola. We Americans now make an American blue cheese, out of cow's milk. *(Continued on page 43)*

Antique Dairy Items courtesy of Gwinn Collection, Pennbrook Milk Company, Philadelphia, Pa.

DECORATING for under ten dollars...

By L. L.-CHRISTENSEN





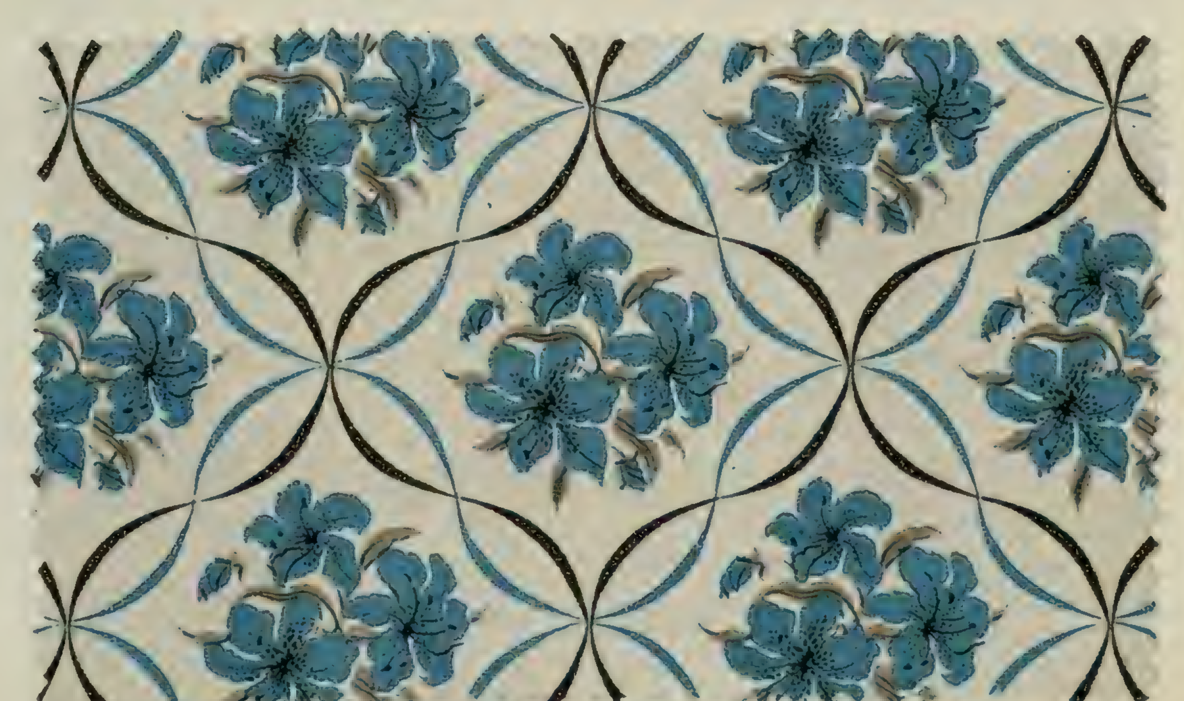
THIS GAY KITCHEN CAN BE YOURS

◆ Create lively effects in the kitchen by the use of modern shelf edgings, oilcloth accessories, and plain paper shades with flower decoration added. Continue your scheme with oilcloth for the chair pads, on the table and on the shelves. For a final dash of color and style, make curtains of oilcloth. And if your walls are plain, set them off with a set of bright pottery plates.

1 white window shade	$ .45
1 roller	.20
Clopay Corporation	
½ yd. oilcloth to cut motifs for shade trim at 74 cents a yd.	.37
1½ yds. oilcloth to cover table at 94 cents a yd.	1.41
1 yd. oilcloth for curtains at 94 cents a yd.	.94
2 oilcloth chair pads at 59 cents a pad	1.18
10 yds. shelf edging at 12 cents a yd.	1.20
2 yds. oilcloth shelving at 23 cents a yd.	.46
Wankraft Products	
4 ten-inch plates at 50 cents a plate	2.00
Paden City Pottery	
	$8.21

All prices are approximate.

READER SERVICE BULLETIN: How to Glue and Sew Oilcloth. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope for your copy to Home Editor, Liberty Magazine, 37 W. 57th Street, New York 19, N.Y.



ASK-THE-MAN KITCHEN

Continued from Page 37

now about windows, doorways, wiring, and plumbing. These factors determine the arrangement of major appliances. (And remember to check with your bank on the possibility of including appliances in your mortgage.) In an older home, you take what you get and cooperate, unless you're remodeling. Even when you're not remodeling, you can revamp your kitchen. Without shifting major appliances, you can supply roomy work-storage space at refrigerator, range, and sink by installing flexible base and wall cabinets. Or you can increase efficiency and mobile work surface with a good-sized rolling table.

It won't cost you a cent to devote one morning to rearranging food and utensils near the appliance and work surfaces at which you use them most. See the practical suggestions on page 37. When The Man adds up just these without-cost improvements, he's likely to act on your plea for added cabinets and counters. And he's more than likely to ask himself, "Why can't my office be this efficient?"

(Six-cubic-foot-capacity gas refrigerator with frozen-food compartment, meat storage, and egg trays; two vegetable fresheners. Gas range with baking oven, swing-out broiling oven, utensil drawer, automatic clock control and timer. Double-bowl, 66-inch sink, with five-drawer and sliding-shelf cabinets, automatic spray attachment. Base cabinets with linoleum counters. Wall cabinets, whatnot shelves, roll-back-door cabinet. The entire package runs from about $1,200 to $1,300, depending on your geographical location. All appliances and cabinets may be bought separately. Since family needs vary, you may want a larger or smaller refrigerator or range; more or fewer or different cabinets.)

PAY-FOR-ITSELF LAUNDRY

Continued from Page 39

your clothes as well as linens, you can count on the investment's paying for itself in about three years.

What's in Liberty's laundry? The latest wringer washer, with eight-pound load capacity; wall cabinets for laundry and other supplies; an extra-deep laundry tray with stainless steel bowl and linoleum top, enclosed in a 36-inch cabinet. It becomes an extra sink—for father when he washes up after greasing the car; for the kids, after a muddy play session; for you when arranging flowers or preparing quantities of fruits and vegetables for freezing or canning.

Edging up to the tray is an electric drier — considered by most housewives who have one to be the century's outstanding development next to nylon stockings. Someone finally did something about the weather. The drier is the result. No more delayed washing when it rains; no more sheets and towels draped around. Instead, route laundry straight from wringer to drier; vary the timing according to the load and whether you want it fluff-dry or ready to iron. With a wringer washer, this drier proves even more helpful than with an automatic. Next is a light-weight folding basket —easy to carry from room to room.

To lift our laundry out of the ordinary, we've built in a wooden clothes hamper (not shown) and an amazingly useful table-cabinet. You can make them at home (see Reader Service bulletins). The broad table needs but one leg for support; the wall serves as backing for the shelves. At the end you'll store your portable electric ironer; swing it out when wanted. Here's a made-to-order sewing headquarters, with cutting table, hand iron, and folding board. The family carpenter, whether amateur faucet-fixer or accomplished craftsman, can adopt this as tool chest and work table. With wall cabinets and open shelves, almost any hobby can be centered here — photography, model planes, garden planning. And — although the children may deny this — with proper lighting, the table and shelves make an ideal study, one easily supervised.

CHEESE ROUND THE WORLD

Continued from Page 41

One of my favorite salads is of limestone lettuce with a Roquefort dressing and striped with ham and chicken. And is that something!

A not-quite-so-hard cheese is the Dutch Gouda, with flattened top and bottom. When spiced with caraway seeds, it becomes Leyden cheese. If in Norway, it becomes Nokkelost.

And now let's see about those hard cheeses. Cheddar is the most familiar; it's what you order for making macaroni and cheese, soufflés, fondues, omelets, grilled sandwiches, rarebits, and the hundred and one entrées you will find so delicious and welcome for Lenten meals.

Swiss cheese belongs to the same hard-cheese group. The characteristic eyes, or holes, are developed during the ripening process.

Then there's Provolone, a hard smoked cheese. All hard cheese is protected by a natural rind, formed during the curing.

Whether you serve it as an appetizer, main dish, or dessert, cheese has been good to man from earliest times.

READER SERVICE BULLETIN: For your copy of Good Meals with Cheese, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Home Editor, Liberty Magazine, 37 West 57th Street, New York 19, N. Y.

Olive-Cheese Custard

Spread both sides of 5 slices of bread with butter or margarine and cut into cubes. Place a layer of cubes in a shallow casserole and sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper. Cover with layer of sliced stuffed olives, then with layer of grated American cheese. Repeat until all ingredients have been used (½ cup sliced stuffed olives and 1 cup shredded American cheese).

Beat 3 eggs. Add ¼ teaspoon dry mustard and 2⅓ cups milk. Beat thoroughly. Pour over the mixture in casserole.

Bake in a slow oven (300°F.) 40 minutes or until set.

SALADS MEN LIKE

Continued from Page 40

Simple French Dressing

1 cup salad oil
⅓ cup vinegar (use two kinds)
1 teaspoon sugar (some gourmets say no)
1½ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon dry mustard
1 clove garlic

Measure all ingredients into a bottle or jar. Cover tightly and shake well. Chill several hours, then remove garlic. Shake thoroughly before serving. Makes 1⅓ cups.

Variations:

Chiffonade Dressing

¾ cup Simple French Dressing
2 tablespoons chopped hard-cooked egg
1 tablespoon chopped green pepper
1 tablespoon chopped pimiento
1 teaspoon chopped parsley
¼ teaspoon onion juice

Florentine Dressing

To ¾ cup Simple French Dressing add 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh raw spinach.

reared in a small Pennsylvania town and went to school with white girls. In 1941 she enlisted in the WAC. Upon returning from overseas she found her erstwhile white friends married, and she was no longer accepted by them. She seems utterly lost, neither fish nor fowl. I think her solution will be to move away – and pass.

◆ I still had to find the girl who was passing for the rest of her life. I located her in a city about 200 miles from New York. I felt like a character in a Hitchcock movie. For I had promised – should we meet again–never to recognize her.

She is tall as a show girl is tall and she carries herself beautifully. Her skin is tan smooth, as if she had but recently returned from vacation. The bridge of her patrician nose is freckled, her straight dark-brown hair worn New Look manner, bangs and a silky thinned bob. She was hatless, her tweed suit smartly tailored, her leather pouch bag swinging from one shoulder. She could have been any girl in any advertisement in any of the fashion magazines. I shall call her Gladys. And this is her story, told because she hopes that some day conditions will change so that people like herself will not feel driven to pass:

"I went to a progressive school in Ohio. I was the only Negro in a class of twenty. I also went to a summer camp and was the only Negro there. The day I left for camp, as the head counselor counted noses, she said, 'We all seem to be here but the little colored girl.' Then I raised my hand to tell her I was that girl. Years later the same thing occurred as I was about to receive my Phi Beta Kappa key. The man who gave them to us kept looking for 'that colored girl.'

"I attended a state university in the Middle West. At the time only two other colored girls were registered. We were not allowed to live in the dormitories, but had to board with Negro families whose homes were at least forty-five minutes from the college. It was a long, wearisome, costly trip, back and forth to our classes. And there was no campus life for us. Going to a dance was a farce. I tried it once. To the tune of penetrating stares I danced with my brown-skinned escort over and over again."

So, after graduation, Gladys made up her mind to go to New York City, which she hoped would be cosmopolitan and more tolerant.

In New York, Gladys stayed with a colored family living on upper Riverside Drive. Mrs. K., the head of this household, was not so optimistic as Gladys. "Wait until you've been here awhile," said Mrs. K.

Gladys refused to let Mrs. K. discourage her. She went job hunting. Having majored in music and hearing that one of the better music stores was looking for a girl who could sell, play the music, and discuss it intelligently, she applied for the position. She was hired on the spot. She was never asked about her color. "Wait," warned Mrs. K.

Then one day, while having lunch with the other girls, one of them said, "Thank goodness, no niggers come into the store. I'd hate to wait on a nigger."

Gladys' stomach did a flip-flop. "But why?" she managed to ask.

"Oh, you're just a hick," the girls accused. "You wouldn't like niggers if you really knew them."

And Gladys found herself quietly answering, "I think I know Negroes very well. You see, I've been one all my life."

Shortly after lunch that day, the manager sent for her. He said, "I think you have an enemy here. One of the girls says you're colored."

"I am," answered Gladys.

She was promptly discharged with two weeks' pay and a reference stating she was "a capable colored girl."

◆ She said to me, "I know that's an old story, but it's new if it happens to you. This, of course, all happened before the enactment of New York's Fair Employment Practices Act. Nowadays–in New York–if I wanted to make a fuss, I could bring my complaint to the State Commission Against Discrimination. This group would investigate, and if they found unlawful discrimination, they would issue an order requiring that it cease and that the violator reinstate me."

However, the incident stuck, striking deeply. On top of that, Gladys heard some sad family news. Her cousin had died in childbirth. The cousin might have died anyway. Gladys knows that. "But the hospital in Pennsylvania refused to allow her Negro doctor to officiate and she was obliged to have an interne. I shall always feel that, because of her color, everything medically possible wasn't done for her."

The cousin's death coming right after the job loss led to deep depression for Gladys. She would have continued to mope except for the fact that she received a note from her college beau, Jerry. He, too, was in New York and wanted to visit her. Gladys felt Jerry, who is as fair of skin as she, would understand her mixed feelings. She was right. His specialty is business administration, and as soon as he had admitted he was colored he had been fired, not from one job but from two. He had grown as despondent as Gladys.

"Jerry was tired of being mentally lynched," she said. "I told him, 'Everything's so cockeyed with us. I'm like a blouse dyed to match a skirt and coming out a few shades too dark, but enough to spoil the whole thing. Off color,' I said. And he said, "It needn't be like the blouse. The whole thing needn't be spoiled.' "

From that day Jerry and Gladys talked of only two subjects–getting married and passing. They weighed the pros and cons of passing.

"When it came to having a nice home and decent medical care and happy children who would receive, without *question* or *legal fights,* the benefits of our country, we took the step," Gladys said.

Jerry went to the city where I had met Gladys and he secured a good job with a nationally known company. Then they each returned home and said good-by to their parents. "That was the hardest," said Gladys.

They met again in New York City to be married at the Municipal Building. There they finally crossed the line, for on the marriage license, opposite "Color," Jerry for the first time wrote their lie. In unhesitating strokes, according to Gladys, he wrote the word that did it–"White."

They now own a small house in a group of nice houses on the outskirts of their new city. Jerry is a Rotarian; Gladys has her weekly bridge club and is an active member of her church. Their two children, a boy and a girl, will, when they are old enough, attend the best schools. When people ask about their backgrounds, Gladys and Jerry try to change the subject, though, in a pinch, Gladys says they come from the South and their parents are dead.

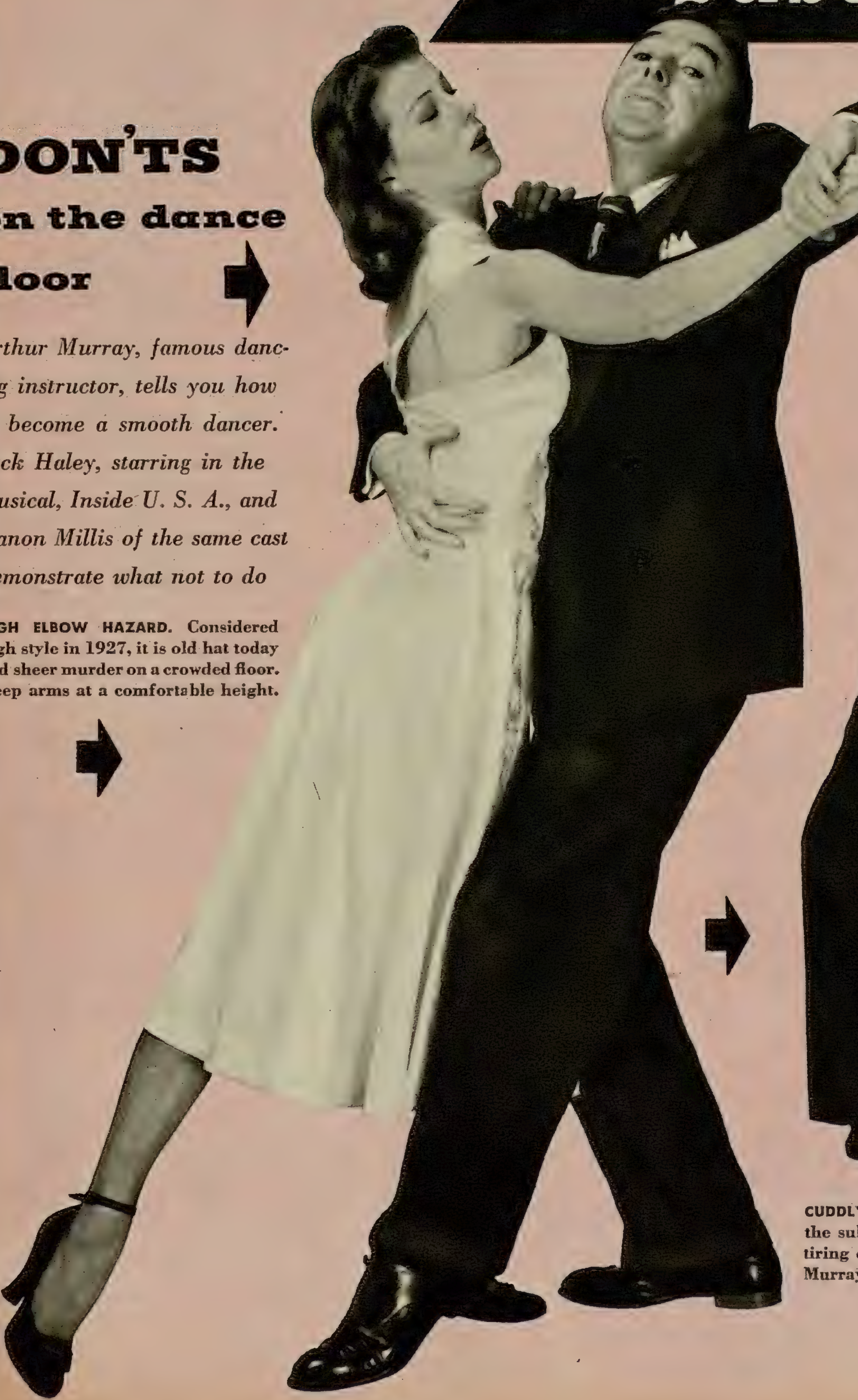
◆ There is one hitch! Most of the local help is colored, and Gladys will not hire a Negro. "Maybe because I'm afraid of being found out."

This complex became a boomerang when the members of her bridge club criticized Gladys on the grounds that she is intolerant! These members must have been more than a little puzzled, since Gladys vouchsafed no answer to their accusation but stubbornly continued refusing to employ a Negro maid. ◆ ◆

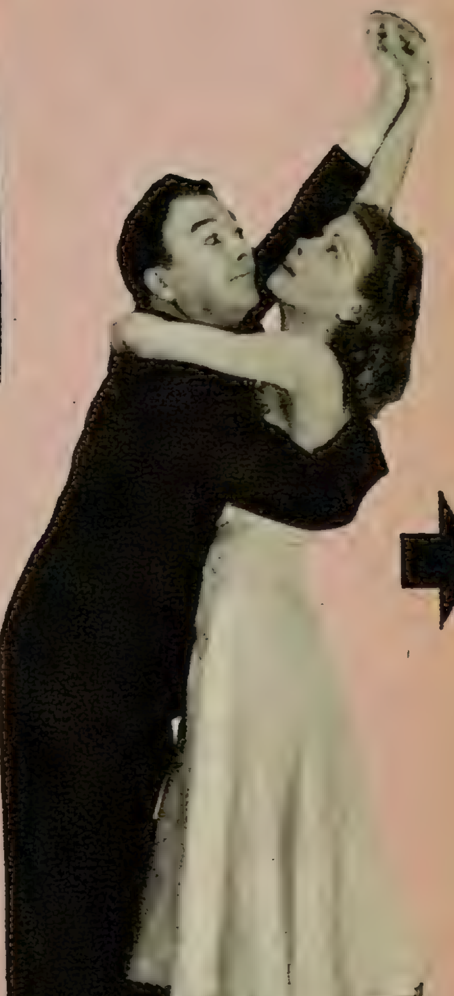
Liberty pastime

DON'TS on the dance floor

Arthur Murray, famous dancing instructor, tells you how to become a smooth dancer. Jack Haley, starring in the musical, Inside U. S. A., and Nanon Millis of the same cast demonstrate what not to do



HIGH ELBOW HAZARD. Considered high style in 1927, it is old hat today and sheer murder on a crowded floor. Keep arms at a comfortable height.



CUDDLY STRAPHANGERS. Fine for the subway or trolley, but terribly tiring on the dance floor, says Mr. Murray. And coziness looks silly.

DON'TS on the dance floor

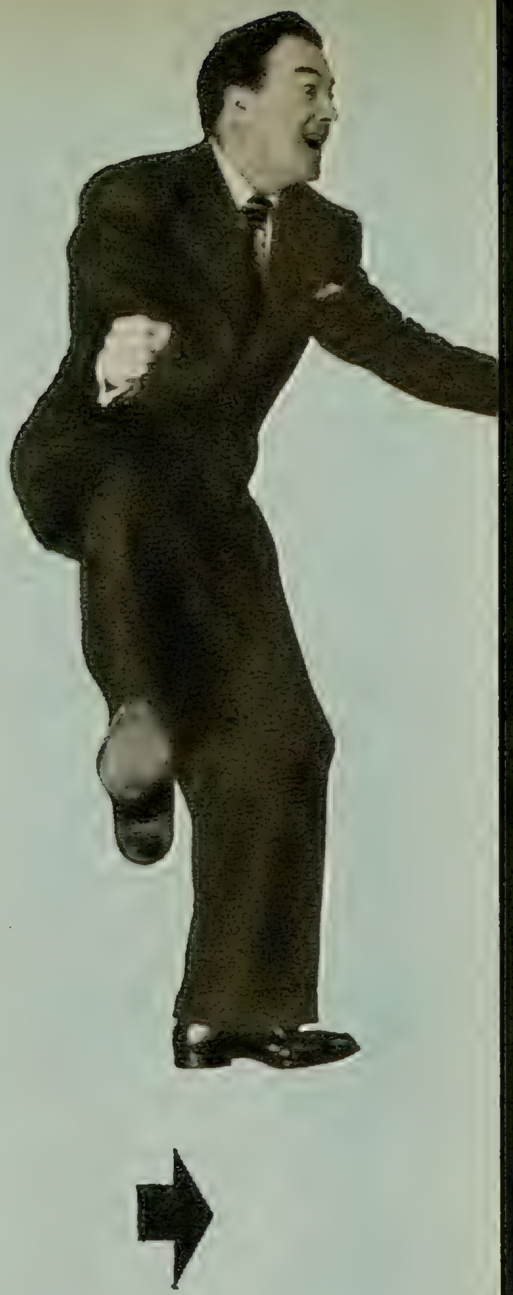
BY ARTHUR MURRAY

ARTHUR MURRAY

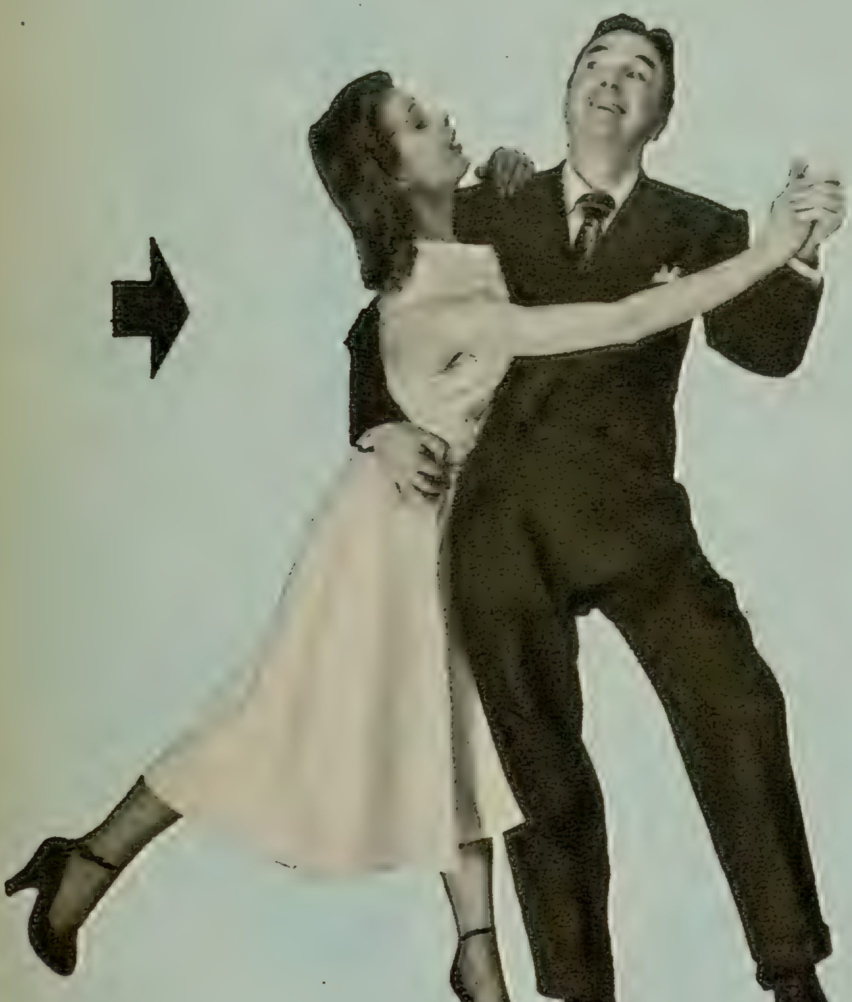
◆ Granted that you already know how to dance, let's concentrate on how to become a good dancer. First, you must know the basic steps such as the fox trot, waltz, rumba, tango. To do them well it is vital to cultivate lightness by practicing these numbers alone. If you learn your partner's steps too, you won't follow blindly. You can also easily keep your feet out of your partner's way if you develop long, free, swinging steps. Avoid fancy holds, but don't be afraid of a firm grip. Your position should be guided by comfort, common sense, and convention. Learn a variety of steps. Even though you were pretty hot stuff doing the 1927 gallop, brush up on the new patterns, for you can follow—or lead—only as many steps as you know well. The whole secret of good leading and successful following is to know your own part well and to know the steps.

A good dancer always moves from the hips down. Pumping your arms or flouncing your elbows betrays an unconscious attempt to keep time to the music because your feet can't do it. Train your feet by practicing alone. And remember not to hug the floor with your feet; lift them a fraction of an inch off the floor. You'll look and feel graceful.

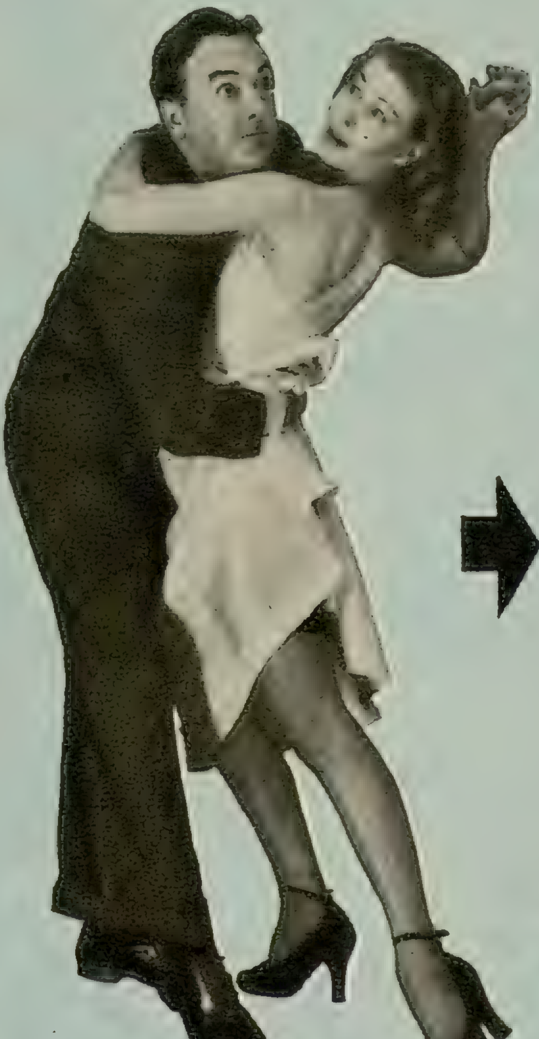
Contrary to all popular notions, the girl who can lead makes the best follower, for she will be able to dance *with* her partner, not after him. All this advice takes a heap of practice on your part if you want to become a good dancer, but the resulting enjoyment will be worth it. ◆◆



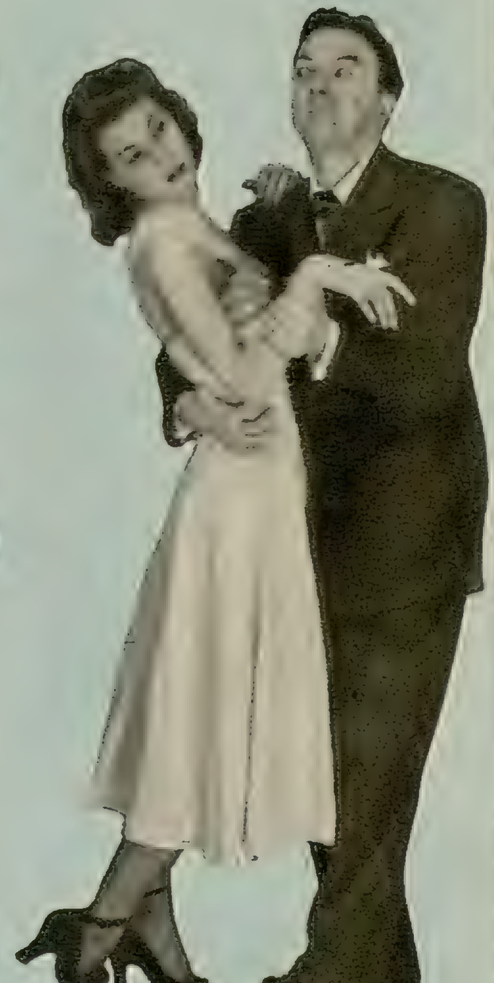
Photographs by Knopf from Pix



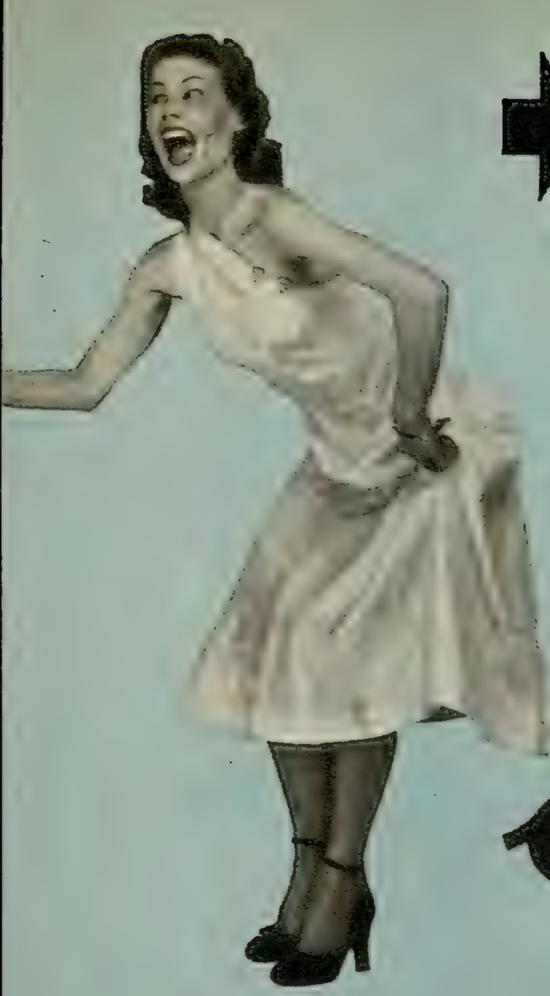
THE SIDESADDLE RIDE. Jack is having a wonderful time galloping around the floor, but Nanon can't dance, much less follow, while she's straddled on his hip.



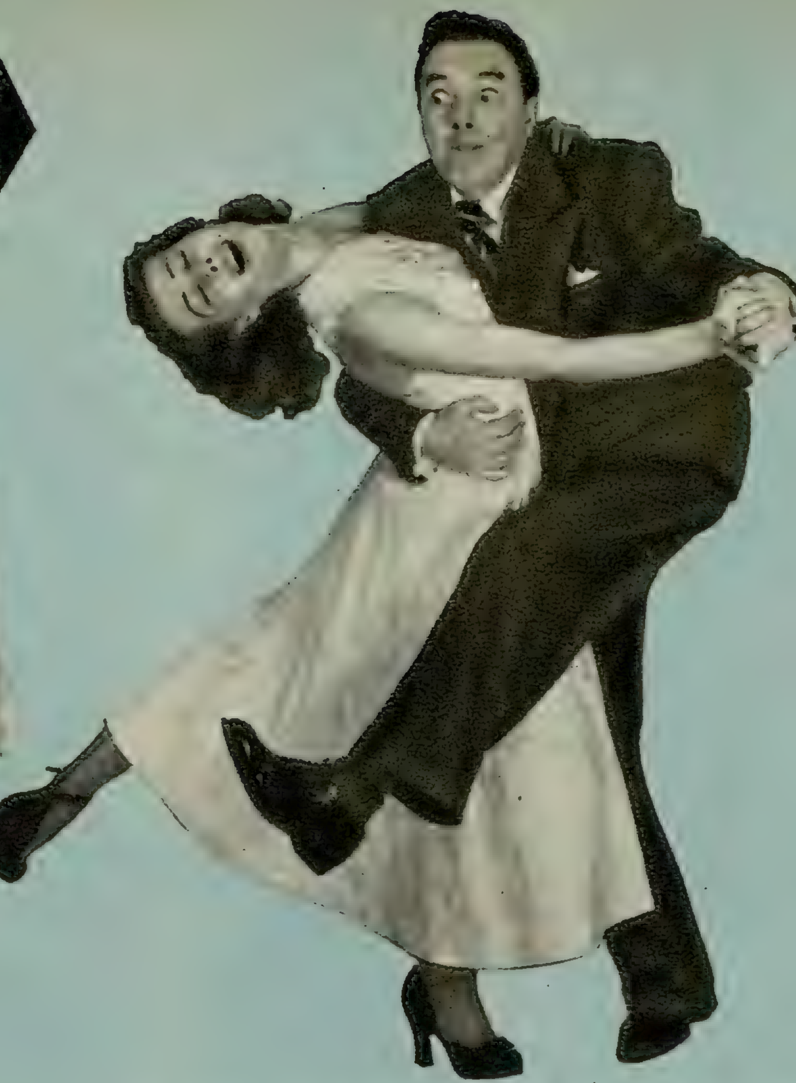
BOA-CONSTRICTOR GRIP. Besides looking resolved to do or die, Jack's hold hikes up Nanon's dress much higher than the designer intended. There's a rear view!



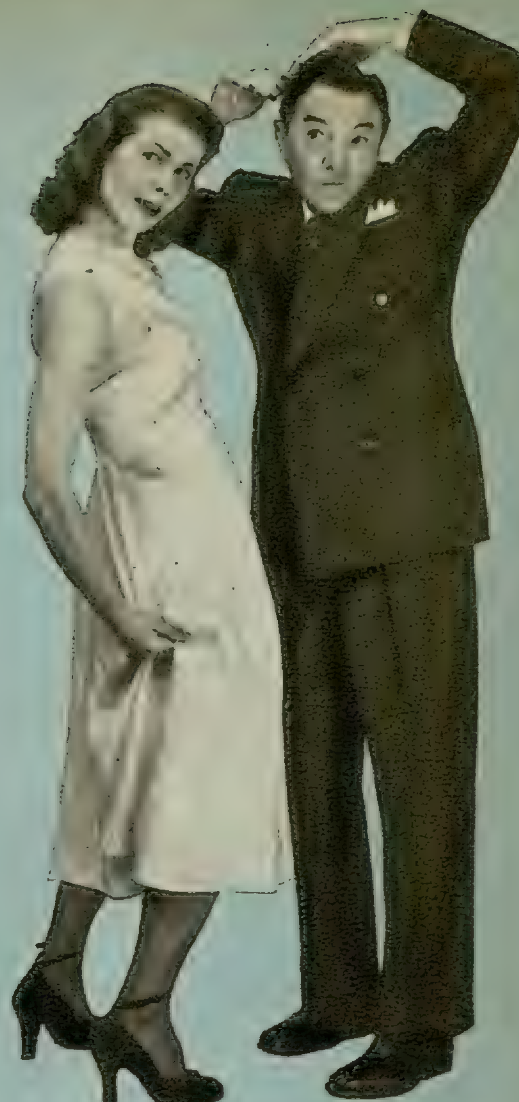
THE LISTLESS DROOP. Dancing like a lump of lead may seem sophisticated to you, but not to your partner. None of the 5,000,000 Murray graduates do that.



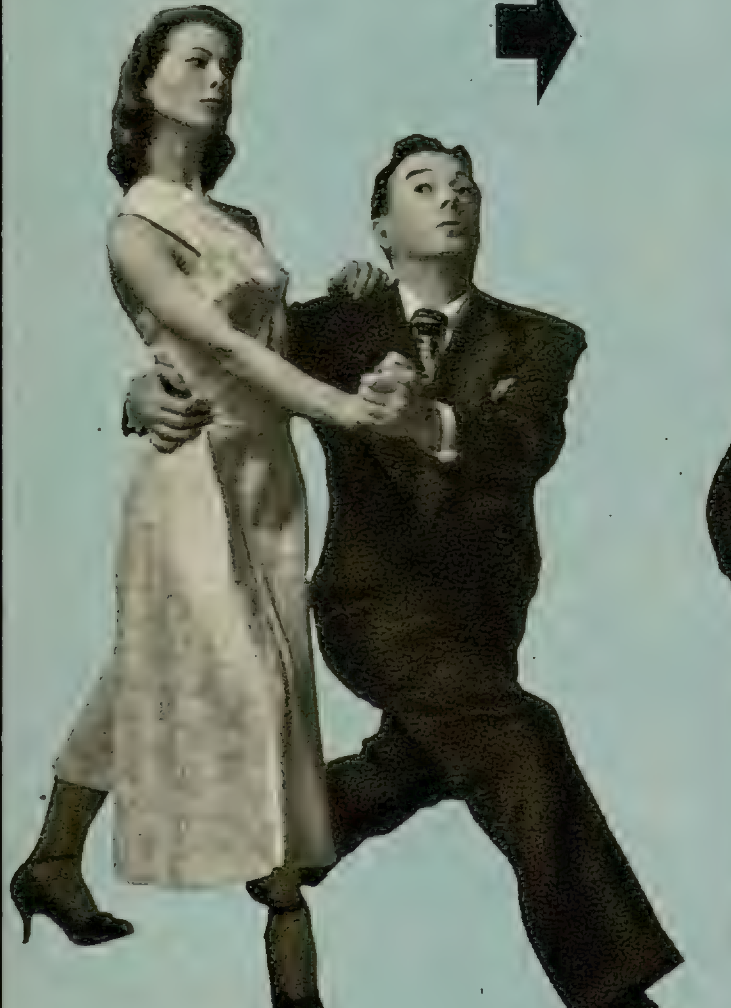
THE FLOOR HOGS. They need an empty floor and a willing audience. Arthur Murray advises you to jitterbug only in a big room or at private parties.



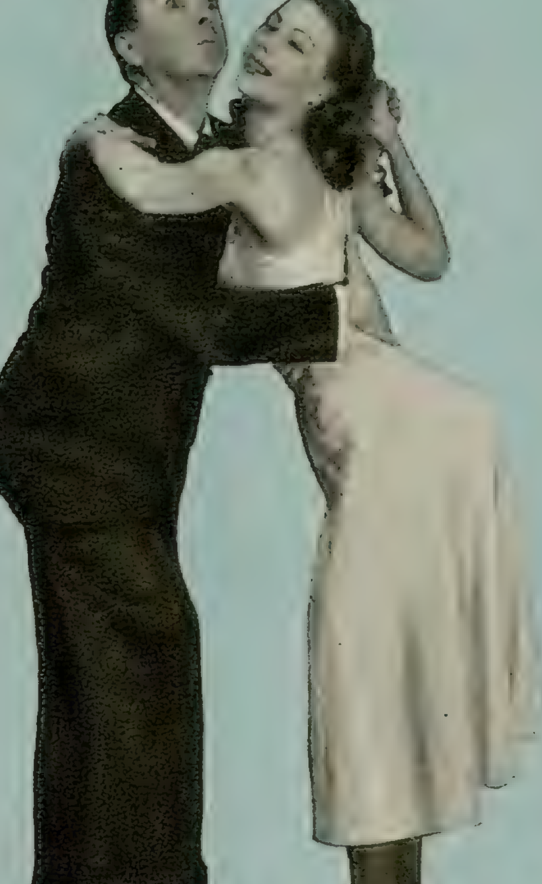
THE SPINE-CRACKING WRESTLER. The way Jack is flinging Nanon around, she'll soon have her brains addled. Wrestling is a manly art, but keep it for the men.



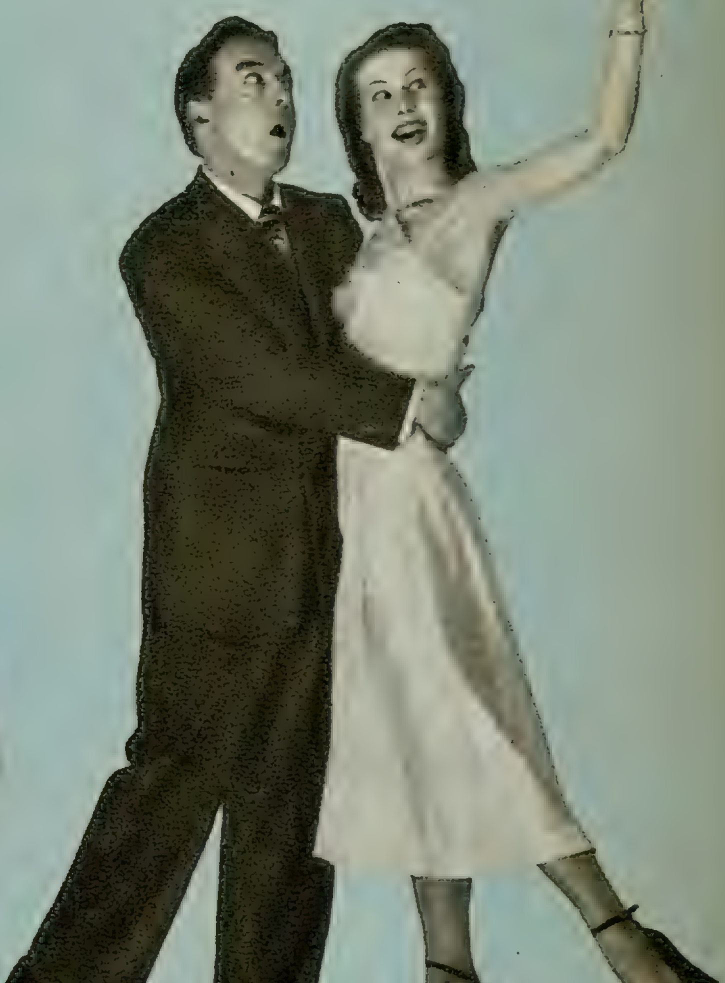
THE GREAT AMERICAN GESTURE. After you've streamlined your rhythm the Murray way, don't ruin the effect by girdle tugging on the ballroom floor.



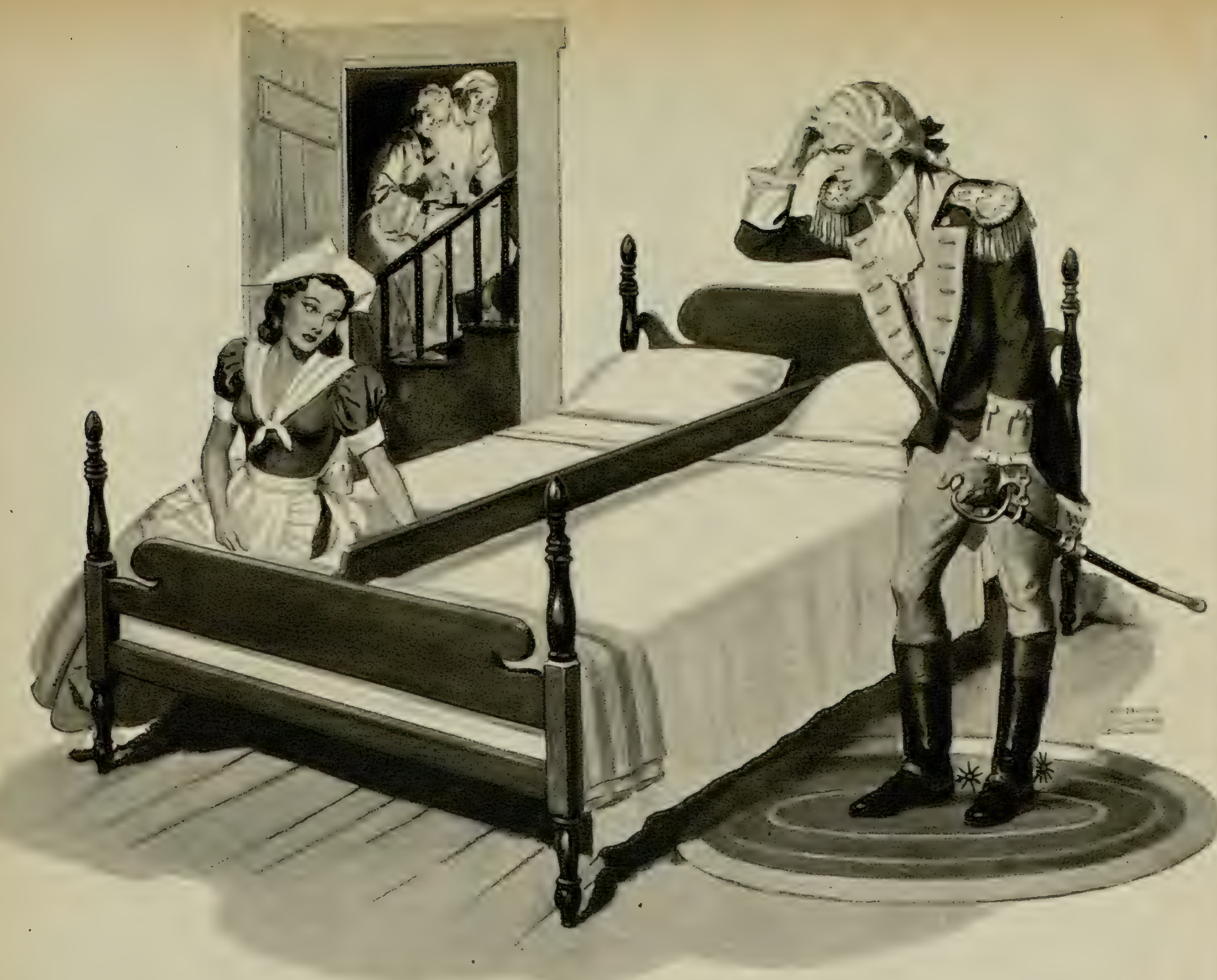
THE SHOW-OFF. Jack Haley impersonates Dippy Dan, the dancer who adores deep knee bends and tricky steps while his partner feels helpless. Strictly solo.



PULL 'EM IN! If you want to look like a pair of comic characters, pull your partner forward so that the derrière waves in the breeze. Don't forget the audience.



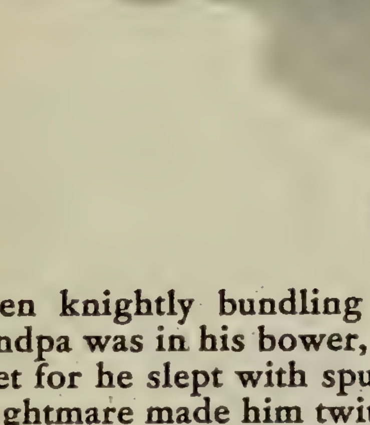
THE YOO-HOO STANCE. She's so busy waving to her acquaintances that their dance becomes a slow walk. Flirts are a pain in the neck to masculine pride.



Bundling without Bungling

When knightly bundling was in flower and great-grandpa was in his bower, he often played heck with a sheet for he slept with spurs upon his feet. And when a nightmare made him twitch, the damsel really had to stitch. But both the sheets and great-grandma survived the calls of great-grandpa. Since boots and spurs are not in vogue and guest rooms are today the mode, your sheets must still stand rips and tears of laundries, kids, and derrières. But mending sheets is now passé; our whistle bait has a better way, and sheets don't face such knightly slaughter. A colonial dame's great-granddaughter selects our own FORT SUMTER sheets to spur beaux on to spurless feats.

Unlike old times when couples bundled and in the process often bungled, we make our SPRINGMAIDS much the best and proved it in a strenuous test. We took our own FORT SUMTER brand, woven and finished by skillful hand. Each sheet was washed 400 times—a test like this would slick new dimes. Two hundred times they were abraded, yet none were either worn or faded. That's equal to a generation of wear and tear and vellication. In speaking of FORT SUMTER covers, we really wish all fabric lovers, when homeward bound from some dull party, would test SPRINGMAIDS—they're all so hardy that you can get a running start and dive in—they won't come apart. The moral is, to each of you: No matter what you say or do, remember that in cold or heat, you can't go wrong on a SPRINGMAID sheet.



SPRINGS MILLS

200 Church Street • New York 13, New York
Atlanta Chicago Dallas Los Angeles

For a set of 10 SPRINGMAID ads suitable for framing, send 25 cents to Springs Mills, New York.

ELLIOTT WHITE SPRINGS, *president of The Springs Cotton Mills, has written another book which was indignantly rejected by every editor and publisher who read it. So he had it printed privately and sent it to his friends for Christmas. After they read it, he ran out of friends, so there are some extra copies. It contains a veritable treasury of useless information, such as how to build cotton mills, how to give first aid on Park Avenue, and how to write advertisements.*

While they last, you can secure a copy by sending a dollar and postage to us. Unlike SPRINGMAID *fabrics, satisfaction is not assured, and no money will be refunded.* © 1949, The Springs Cotton Mills

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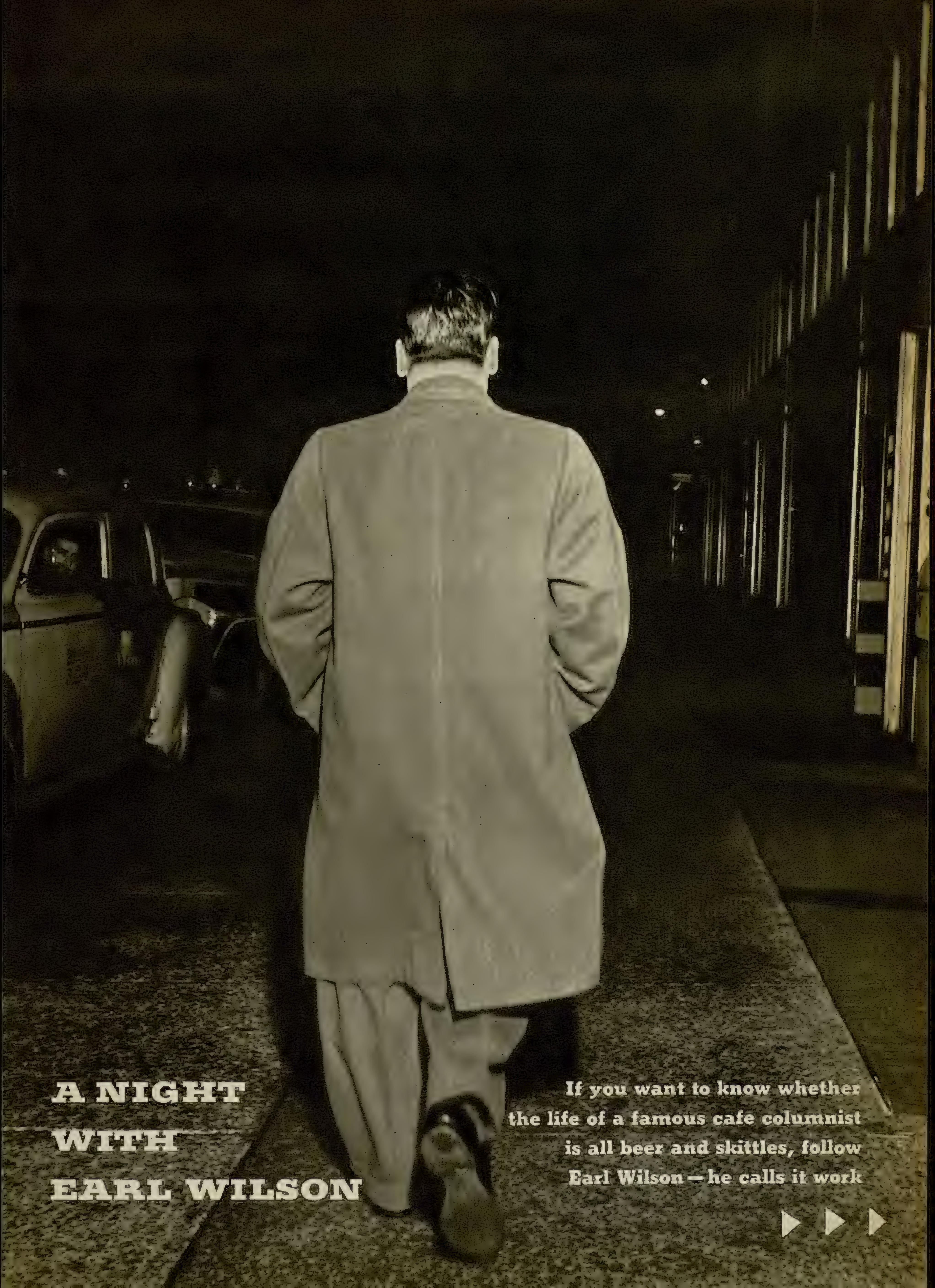

A NIGHT WITH EARL WILSON

If you want to know whether the life of a famous cafe columnist is all beer and skittles, follow Earl Wilson—he calls it work

▶ ▶ ▶

THE LONG NIGHT BEGINS for Earl Wilson at noon, even though he rarely gets to bed until after 4 A.M. He's starting the day by operating a "pipe line" to one of his numerous contacts on the saloon beat.

THE ACTUAL "GRIND" STARTS at 10 P.M. Earl has the B.W. (beautiful wife) for company on his rounds. "If I didn't take my wife, people would begin to talk—especially my wife," quips the famous reporter.

EARL IS NOW IN THE GROOVE—notebook out and cuties vying for his ear. The saloon editor does most of his night prowling in New York, but he doesn't neglect such fertile fields as Miami and Hollywood.

liberty pastime

A NIGHT WITH EARL WILSON

EARL WILSON

◆ Among the juiciest tidb
to appear in any column a
the morsels that Earl Wils
serves up to his readers
newspapers from New Yo
to Paris to Honolulu. No
specter of rank or perso
Wilson is probably the on
columnist to have reported
the washroom habits of t
Duchess of Windsor. (S
didn't tip the attendant, E
wrote.) Even though he wri
of girdles and "gay deceivers," he somehow ma
ages to stay within the limits of good taste.
many his stuff is considered the most accurat
recorded Broadway Americana since the late R
Lardner covered the town's hot spots. You m
think the job of gathering the grist that goes in
his column is all beer and skittles, but Earl insi
that it's work. His wanderings among Saloon S
ciety start at 10 P.M. and continue until most
the cafés close. By that time Wilson has a notebo
full of the scribbles that only he can translate
time for the 7 A.M. deadline. He works at hor
and usually on the dot of 4 A.M. he hands the fi
ished copy to a taxi driver to be delivered at t
New York Post, Manhattan outlet for his colum
Wilson got the saloon beat when the editor of t
Post's amusement section was called into the arm
Most of the spontaneity of his column, like that
the late O. O. McIntyre's, stems from the fact th
he has been able to continue to view Broadwa
glitter with the gawking eyes of a country bo
Earl Wilson was born in saloonless Rockford, Oh
40 years ago and once taught Sunday school the
The B. W. (beautiful wife Rosemary Lyons W
son), their six-year-old son Slugger, and Ear
mother-in-law are almost as well known to
readers as the celebrities he writes about. T
dedication of his first book—I Am Gazing Into
8-Ball—contains a typical Wilson twist. It sa
"To the wonderful woman who cooks my mea
darns my socks and rears my son—my mother-
law." In his spoofing autobiography, which
called Pikes Peek or Bust, he wrote that "t
Wilsons reside in a handsome town house, u
stairs over a delicatessen store." Appropriate
the title of his next book, soon to be publish
is Let 'Em Eat Cheesecake. Besides his book wr
ing, he's done a bit of play acting. He recen
played himself on the radio whodunit show, Bo
ton Blackie. This brought some wisecracks fro
his fellow columnists. For example, John Crosb
the New York Herald Tribune's caustic critic
the airways, said of Wilson's performance, "H
a man to be watched. Don't let him out of yo
sight." ◆

Photos by Bill Mark

ALL IN THE NIGHT'S WORK. Life in Rockford, Ohio, Wilson's home town, was never like this. You don't have to twist his arm more than once to "draft" him as a judge in a beauty contest. Note the seriousness with which he applies himself.

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER of a columnist. He can give a showgirl a plug in his column that may send her on to stardom.

MUCH OF THE REAL DOPE about Hollywood is learned in New York by columnists like Wilson. Here he is interviewing Joan Crawford.

GRIST FOR THE COLUMN. Frank Sinatra (left) does the talking as Wilson and the famous eatery owner, Toots Shor, bend their ears.

Liberty PICKS THE PICTURES APPROVED FOR ALL THE FAMILY

By Elizabeth Wilson

PORTRAIT OF JENNIE—starring Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten, and Ethel Barrymore—is David O. Selznick's entry in the Academy Award Handicap. It is sure to be a strong contender, for it is a prestige film and handsomely done. None of the fragile, uncanny atmosphere of the Robert Nathan story has been lost in the screening. Miss Jones gives a first-rate portrayal as the ethereal Jennie who inspires an impoverished artist (Joseph Cotten) to paint his masterpiece. Miss Barrymore plays the art dealer. David Wayne—one of the stars of the Broadway production of Mister Roberts—scores a hit in his film debut. He plays Gus the cabman. The picture ends with a hurricane that you'll not soon forget.

Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotten by a New York City brook. Most of the filming of Portrait of Jennie was done in Central Park.

THE ACCUSED—Hal Wallis' new spine-chiller for Paramount—is not only something new in suspense films, but it is a corker. The story concerns a professor of psychology who kills a wealthy amorously inclined student when he tries to attack her on a lonely cliff above the Pacific. Last year's Academy Award winner, Loretta Young plays the teacher, and proves conclusively that she didn't win the Oscar by a fluke. As the teacher, she tries to make the student's death look like an accident. But she reckons without police lieutenant Wendell Corey. Nor did she figure on falling in love with the boy's uncle, played by Robert Cummings. Douglas Dick is excellent as the neurotic student.

Teacher (Loretta Young) murders a student and then finds herself falling in love with her victim's uncle (Robert Cummings).

CHICKEN EVERY SUNDAY is a pleasant comedy drama that will give you that all's-right-with-the-world feeling. Twentieth Century-Fox has cooked up a fine entertainment. Dan Dailey parks his dancing shoes and plays it straight. He is a lovable guy whose money-making schemes never jell. He gets in more hot water by marrying a girl (Celeste Holm) who wants security. As the witty, penny-pinching wife, Celeste does a convincing job. As each deal falls on its face, she builds another room on their house and takes in another boarder. And the boarders are a joy. They are played by such capable players as Alan Young, William Frawley, Connie Gilchrist, Porter Hall, Katherine Emery, and Whitner Bissell.

Dan Dailey as the lovable schemer, Celeste Holm as his wife, and Colleen Townsend as the daughter in Chicken Every Sunday.

Liberty pastime

It's Amazing! It's Sensational! It's Exclusive!

"The New Arthur Murray Way"

makes learning to dance easier than ever!

Even if you have never danced before you can become a popular partner in a fraction of the usual time "The New Arthur Murray Way"

Take Arthur Murray's short-cut to good times – find the self-confidence and popularity you've always longed for.

Only a few hours at any Arthur Murray Studio will transform you into an expert dancer. His unique methods, now improved to a higher degree than ever before, make learning easy, lightning-quick and such fun!

The key to all the new dances is Arthur Murray's basic discovery — the "First Step to Popularity." Like magic you find yourself leading or following a smart new Fox Trot, Rumba, Samba. You can actually go out dancing after one hour even if you've never danced before.

STOP PASSING UP GOOD TIMES

It's fun to be popular

Only at Arthur Murray's can you get that wonder-working combination of his improved, exclusive methods and the trained skill of his teachers. Save yourself time, money, disappointment. Learn the "Arthur Murray Way." You'll be a joy to dance with, a pleasure to watch. Get a dance analysis *free* at any Arthur Murray Studio. Come in *today*. Have the time of your life at your very next party!

PROOF You can dance after one lesson!

See how quickly you can learn to dance "The New Arthur Murray Way." Send for the "Murray-Go-Round" today! It contains fascinating, entertaining instructions on the Fox Trot, Waltz, Rumba, Samba and Tango. Also How to Lead, How to Follow, etc. *Consult your telephone directory and MAIL THIS COUPON TO YOUR NEAREST ARTHUR MURRAY STUDIO, or send it to Arthur Murray (Studio 23), 11 East 43rd Street, New York 17, N. Y.*

Copr. 1948, Arthur Murray, Inc.

Good dancers are popular— here's the first step to popularity

There is only one basic step to learn with "The New Arthur Murray Way." If you can do this simple step you can learn *any* modern dance. Let our experts prove that you can go dancing after one lesson, become a fine dancer in a short time.

IT'S EASY! TRY IT!
1
2
3

ONLY 25¢

Arthur Murray

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Visit the one nearest you for a FREE dance analysis

ARTHUR MURRAY STUDIOS: Please send me your magazine, "Murray-Go-Round," 44 pages of pictures and instructions on the latest ballroom dances, Fox Trot, Waltz, Rumba, Samba, etc. I enclose 25c.

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LIBERTY—MARCH

WHY I KNOW THERE IS A GOD

Continued from page 31

householder from within; only thus can the Master come in."

Faith is a gift—but a gift you can ask for. "Lord," prayed a man in the Bible, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief." As he laid his situation before God, and as Werfel did, so did I. Not in Palestine, nor in the Pyrenees, but close to the fashionable parade on Fifth Avenue.

On a blustery day, with dark clouds lowering, I turned suddenly into the cathedral there and asked for the gift of faith. In the Lady chapel, I took one more vital step.

"In ten minutes or less I may change my mind," I prayed. "I may scoff at all this and love error again. Pay no attention to me then. For this little time I am in my right mind and heart. This is my best—take it and forget the rest, and, if You are really there, help me."

It was a bright omen to me that when I came out on the Fifth Avenue steps, the sun had crashed through the dark skies. There was a feeling of hope in my heart; not peace, but the confident expectancy of peace.

Merely for the record, and not to prove anything whatever, let me add that as Werfel was brought safely to the United States, so the perplexities of my problem were most remarkably and swiftly disposed of. Only chance would explain it to the unbelieving, because no human agency could have contrived the events. The complication dissolved itself by the oncoming of a troop of beautiful coincidences—presently I no longer had a serious problem.

In that, I was most fortunate. It might easily have been otherwise. Yet do not mistake me; even so, as I know now, my petition would have been heard. Millions of prayers go up every instant and every one is answered, but sometimes the answer is a refusal. The old Greeks had a saying that when the gods were angry with a man, they granted his prayers. A little boy implores his father for a bicycle. There is nothing inherently wrong in such a request. But if the neighborhood is dangerous because of the traffic, the wise father has to refuse.

It is hard for the child to accept that. In perfect trust, we learn to say "Thy will be done," knowing that whatever answer comes is best.

But for me the real knowing of God was just beginning on that cathedral day. Soon I learned that only incidentally is prayer an asking for help. One should have to ask favors of God no oftener than a sensible child asks favors of his father on earth. Prayer is not a slot machine into which you drop a request and a boon falls out of the bottom. We do pray for help, but oftener we pray for help for others, and even oftener we pray our thanks for blessings already received—above everything else, we pray daily in sheer felicity, in communion, in close contact with the Father, asking nothing whatever but the joy of knowing Him.

It is through prayer that we know there is a God, through prayer that we come to know *Him*—as Father and friend.

◆ Now it is precisely here the intellectuals turn away in scorn. I can never figure out why. Why, in the name of God do they not pray? Just to test it. Why don't they find out by personal experience? The materialist will deride prayer as a superstitious practice, a psychological hoax, a self-hypnosis, an illogical conception, a childish folly—but he will not put it to the pragmatic test in his own discontented life. Tell him that prayer is the straight way to God, and he will reject that way. "Bring Him on, face to face with me," he demands. "Nothing else will do."

But once a man can lift from his soul old Adam's curse of pride, once he finds the humility to ask himself, "Where was I when Thou laidst the foundations of the world?"—once he can, with the perfect trust of a child, reach out to the invisible Father, then comes grace abounding and a man knows God most intimately; nearer than breathing, closer than hands and feet.

God meant it, too, when He said in the first commandment that He was jealous and would have no others before Him. He wants you—all of you. If you have opened the door, He will come in and promptly take possession. And just as promptly you find yourself plagued with a vague unease, that comes even with peace. Your daily life becomes a whole series of paradoxes like that. Possessed of a new feeling of profound tranquillity, nevertheless you want to be active. Your kind instincts will no longer be satisfied merely with sending checks to worthy charities; you will be ashamed thus to buy yourself off. As we come to know God, the urge to serve Him personally becomes overpowering. We must feed the hungry, visit the sick, comfort the widow and orphan, clothe the naked, shelter the shelterless—under our own roof, with our bare hands. That is when a human being comes closest to God and knows Him best, loving Him and serving Him, and that is when he finds the only real happiness possible in this life.

Isn't it strange that it should have taken me 50 years to find that out? Ten thousand times in ten thousand days of that half-century God walked with me to school, rode with me in the bus. Fifty years of never noticing. I have much lost time to make up.

All that faith can bring a man can be confirmed by his intellect. But that process, I dare to think, can wait. If a man would find God, let him first humbly ask for the chance to believe, and meanwhile let him go personally and not by delegate to his less fortunate brothers and sisters—helping the needy of body and soul. He will find what he seeks, for when a man can leave himself and enter the lives of others, he leaves his own heart open so that God may enter and dwell with him. This blessing I wish on every reader of these lines. ◆ ◆

HOW TO BREAK INTO FORT KNOX

Continued from page 19

granite-and-concrete wall of the building and the reinforced-concrete casing of the vault, which is 25 inches thick.

Before him is the door to the vault itself. This little object, which is made of special steel, weighs 26 tons. The only way to open it is for two men to work combinations, one after another. It won't open then if the time lock is on. As the vault doesn't need to be opened every day, the guard who sets the time lock doesn't set it for any regular hour, and he doesn't even tell the other guards what hour he selects.

Oxyacetylene torches would have little effect on the door or walls, as copper strips embedded in them would carry away the heat. Electric drills and hacksaws likewise would barely scratch them. The vault casing includes steel plates, steel I-beams and steel cylinders laced with hoop bands and encased in concrete. The roof of the vault is just as tough as the sides, and there would be no privacy for a cracksman boring from the top: guards in the corridors could see him through mirrors.

Any fumbling about inside the building would set off alarms. The

Mint has installed the usual watchmen's signals that banks use, also others it doesn't care to discuss. Microphones pick up conversations in the vault so they can be heard in the guardroom. Every watchman's report is recorded by machinery on a paper which falls into a special locked safe, so that if he makes an error he cannot cover it up. Any opening of the door of the big vault is recorded in the same way.

In addition to telephone connections with headquarters on the military reservation next door and with the police in Louisville, the depository has a short-wave set for emergency use in case its wires should be cut. There is also a siren. It has its own water supply and its own power plant for light and heat. Besides gunfire, it has gas weapons and protection against gas attack.

If the regular communications between headquarters and the depository are interrupted, a platoon of heavily armed soldiers shows up outside the fence and asks, in military terms, what gives. There is a secret system to prevent the soldiers from being fooled by favorable reports given under duress.

◆ The Fort Knox depository is small for so important a building. The courthouse back in your home county is probably larger, but not nearly so solid. It was built in 1936, on land formerly part of the military reservation, at a cost of $560,000, and was made bombproof, at least for those pre-atomic days.

The popular crack that "they dig gold out of the ground at one place and then bury it again at Fort Knox" is partly true, because the vault has two floors, and one of them is below ground level. The vault, which, like the building around it, was designed to be bombproof, measures 40 by 60 feet. It has 28 compartments for gold storage, 14 on each level.

In the compartments are about 12,500 tons of gold, all in bar form, a ton being worth roughly a million dollars at the official price of $35 an ounce. Each bar is somewhat smaller than a building brick, but would be harder to throw, as it weighs about 27½ pounds. It's worth $14,000.

Between the infrequent shipments, the vault door is opened occasionally for inspection and to prevent "freezing." It fits so snugly in its frame that if left undisturbed for a long period the slight accumulation of rust might cause it to stick and refuse to open. Each compartment in which gold is stored has its individual door that is locked and sealed. A compartment which

ECONOMICAL
...easy...extra good...
new Heinz Macaroni dish

Macaroni, Corn and Corned Beef Casserole

● Combine contents of a tin of Heinz Cooked Macaroni with 1 cup cooked whole kernel corn, 1 6-oz. tin corned beef, 1 green pepper, coarsely chopped. Mix thoroughly. Place in buttered casserole—top with buttered bread crumbs—bake in moderate oven (350° F.) ½ hr.

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57
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HOW TO BREAK INTO FORT KNOX

Continued from page 55

was opened a few months ago for an inspection by John W. Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury, hadn't been unlocked for two years.

The compartment seals are officially examined from time to time, to verify that the gold is there. In debate some years ago, a senator remarked, "We take it for granted that the gold is still in Kentucky. If it is not and nobody should find it out, that would not make any difference." President Roosevelt once made an inspection of the depository.

A number of U. S. senators have visited the building, including President Truman when he was a senator. Representatives can also enter, after clearance with Washington, but seldom do. Generals hardly ever get inside.

The Treasury ships gold the way you and I might do it—by registered mail. The Post Office Department supplies postal inspectors, and the Treasury assigns Secret Service men to the shipping points and arranges for troops to travel on the special trains used. At Fort Knox heavy military guards are thrown around the precious mail. The postage on $5 or $6 billions runs to about $1 million.

As the bars are of gold in almost pure form, they are soft and must be handled with the greatest care to avoid loss through abrasion.

◆

Contrary to popular opinion, the whole gold hoard is not at Knox. Nor is any of it in the Treasury Building at Washington. Indeed, there's not an ounce of gold in the capital vaults, unless you include jewelry and keepsakes that American citizens in foreign countries have confided to embassies and consulates over the years. But $11½ billions of the gold treasure is in depositories at New York, Denver, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Seattle. The biggest deposit outside Fort Knox is in Denver, which has $5.7 billions. Early in the war, when there was fear of an invasion of the Pacific coast, bullion was shipped to Denver from San Francisco and Seattle. The depositories are all fortified, although none but Fort Knox has troops next door.

Bullion would be awkward to steal and virtually impossible to sell in this country. This may be one reason Mrs. Ross carries her vast responsibility with equanimity. ◆ ◆

friday for death

Continued from page 12

in a minute," he said. "Sit tight, Steve."

He chatted amiably for a few minutes. Then his face clouded. "You double-barreled fool," he said angrily. "Meet me at Guido's in about an hour. If you don't, I'll break your silly head!"

He slapped the phone down. "Emotion," he said. "Why must women get so damned emotional?"

We drank the Teacher's straight, out of paper cups. We chased it with water, the way we used to swill it at Camp Upton.

"Rejoice," he said and lifted his cup. "The king is dead. You look as though you expected him to walk in and join us."

"He could come back and haunt us," I said. "We practically wished him to death."

For four years I had chafed under the office routine created for me by Jonas Tripp. I had butchered him often in my own living room. I had boiled him in oil while Gwen listened to my endless stories of his crotchety reign of terror. After a while she began to tease me about him. She told me to change my job if he annoyed me that much. But that was impossible because of Harvey. Harvey had made a promise a long time ago. I wondered now whether he remembered it.

He swallowed a long gulp of Scotch. "You are gazing at the new crown prince of the Tripp empire."

"Hail the prince!" I said. "Is the prince sure he's the only remaining heir?"

"The prince is positive. He willed it all to me, and now I'm boss and we can talk business."

This was the sentence that should have moved me to the edge of my chair. But the excitement had died in me. My mind clung to the image of Gwen as I had seen her last night. She smiled at me slyly when I told her to wait for my call. She had almost laughed at me—that was it. What could it be that took her out on this, the day of days?

◆

"I've felt like a heel these past four years." Harvey popped a hard candy into his mouth. "When I promised you a future here, it never occurred to me that you'd have to warm your tail in that rat nest of yours until Jonas died. It's been a long wait, chum, but from here on in I make good for you." He waved a hand at the mahogany paneling. "It's all little Harvey's now, every last inch of dust and grime. We'll do this dump over, Steve. We'll tear out all the cubbyholes and bring light and air into the business. We'll load it with class so we can gather in new customers, the big ones, naturally. Then, when we're all finished, we'll change that name plate on the door to read, 'Tripp and McGrath,' just like we planned it behind the latrines at Fort Meade, remember?"

"I remember," I said, remembering nothing but the last four hours. If Gwen had made my breakfast, I might have sold her the idea of waiting for my call. But Gwen had not made my breakfast in more than three years.

"What's eating you, Steve?" Harvey seemed let down. He had expected enthusiasm.

"I'm overcome," I said. "I've got to get used to it. I've got to live with it for a while, Harvey."

"Take it home and live with it, then," said Harvey. "Tell it to your little woman."

His phone was ringing again. "We'll finish our bull session later, Steve. Meantime, you just relax. I'll expect you in on Monday morning, bright and early, any time before eleven."

The time clock in the reception room stood at eleven when I went out of there. There was a subway entrance on the next corner. Habit nudged me toward it. For four years I had rushed for this subway entrance immediately after the long day at the office. I would reach this stage of my homeward voyage at precisely 5.06. It had become part of my automaton existence to set my watch with the clock in the station, over the change booth.

I went through the turnstile and corrected my watch. It was 11.08. The gesture seemed strange now. Out of place. I fought off the urge to rush away from this subway station, to take a walk. I could break the good news to Gwen over the dinner table casually, gently. In that way it might be a greater surprise to her.

Or would it only annoy her? Gwen would expect me to remain in character. Steve McGrath, the little boy with the box of candy, the pursuer, the man who kept trying. She had learned to use her coldness, her overpowering disregard, as a weapon. That was why she had taken the trip to Pine Bush.

She needed a vacation. We had never lived apart since the day we were married. A week with her folks would do us good.

She reckoned my loneliness during that long week. She sent me no message. I would have shouted for joy if she had phoned me—just once. And as the days wore on, I found myself hating her for her neglect.

But how completely she controlled me! Only yesterday, last night, she came back from her vacation, and it was as if she had never been away. Had she decided that our marriage was good, that we were still in love?

I took the local all the way uptown. What would she say when I walked in? I pictured the first rush of pleasure, the attempt at gaiety, the forced smile. And then? She might sit at the table in the dinette, leaning lazily on an elbow, her cold eyes bright with some secret enjoyment. She might smile at me in her brittle way, and pass it all off with a few forced words of enthusiasm. And after that she could kill it with a word. It could become stale and dead within a day or two. Because I, myself, had become stale and dead to Gwen.

◆

On the street, I shook off all my doubts. This was a fine day, a spring day. I found myself whistling now, confident, alert, alive.

Gwen and I belonged here. Four years ago we had met in a Greenwich Village bistro, the Tub, an artists' hangout. Gwen had come to New York from upstate, a farm girl. She painted pretty miniatures on lamp shades. She lived with Mitzi Granger in an upstairs studio, complete with skylight, plaster walls, and the roaches and mice that made it different and artistically acceptable. Mitzi danced. Her friends were a group of hams who annoyed Gwen with their posturings. We married quickly. But we did not leave the Village. Bleecker Street was our street.

I let myself into the hall without ringing. I wanted to avoid Mrs. Monati, the ground-floor amazon with the heart of gold and the voice of Sicily. She might greet me in her usual way, arms outflung, mouth wide open, shouting my name loud enough to telegraph my surprise to the second-floor front. I went up the stairs gingerly.

The upstairs hall lay gray and quiet before me. There was a milk bottle in front of Ken Sisley's door. Ken was a cartoonist who worked on a variable schedule. He sketched only when the imp was in him. He would give us a party tonight, I was sure.

I stood, finally, before our door.

GOD...Or The Greatest Fraud That Ever Lived

Almost everyone will agree that Jesus Christ was a great man.

Most people will admit that Jesus was a person of the highest morals... that He was an inspired spiritual leader... that neither before His time, nor since, has anyone performed the miraculous works which He performed.

Yet millions of people refuse to believe that He is the eternal Son of God.

The Catholic Church maintains that Jesus is the Son of God. He is either that — or the greatest fraud that ever lived.

For Christ Himself... under cross-examination by the high priest Caiphas ... was asked: "I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." And Jesus replied: "Thou hast said it" (Matthew XXVI: 63,64).

"O, sure," some may say, "Christ claimed to be the eternal Son of God. But His claim doesn't prove that He really is."

A man who only claims to be the Son of God, however, could not walk upon the waters and quiet the waves as Jesus did. He could not cleanse the lepers... give sight to the blind ... bring the dead back to life. Nor could a man who only claimed to be divine return from the dead as Jesus and no other has ever done.

Scattered through the books of the Old Testament from Genesis to Machabees are numerous prophecies of the coming of the Savior — written as long as 1,000 years before Jesus came upon the earth.

These prophecies describe the family from which the Savior would come ... the circumstances of His birth ... His life of preaching and His miracles . . . and finally, His passion and death in atonement for the sins of mankind. All of these predictions apply to only one person in all the annals of human history — and that one is Jesus Christ.

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"He who is not with Me," Jesus said, "is against Me." Being "with" Jesus is not merely a matter of acknowledging His greatness. It is an obligation to know Christ and His teaching... to believe and follow Him... to pattern our lives to His example and precept.

If you want to know Jesus better... to have a fuller and clearer understanding of His teaching and His plan for our lives... you will find the answer in Christ's Own words as told in the Four Gospels of the New Testament. We shall be happy to send you a copy of the Four Gospels arranged in a continuous narrative for easy reading... upon your request and without cost or obligation. Write today for Gospels No. 8—L.

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LIBERTY

"Morning, Doc. How's business?"

FRIDAY FOR DEATH

Continued from page 57

This was the moment. I reached for the knob and turned it. I took a deep breath and opened the door and went in smiling.

And then all humor left me.

Gwen lay half sprawled on the couch. She had on her bright red robe. The robe was half open over her knees. She did not see me immediately. She couldn't see me. A man sat beside her on the couch, his back to me. He was kissing her. She had her arms around his neck and her hands were in his hair, and I saw the small veins on her wrist and the orange polish on her fingernails. Her foot moved slowly, sensuously, along the cushion. Her slipper dropped to the floor. In the tight moment I heard the rasp of my breath.

The door clicked closed behind me.

The man turned and Gwen saw me. I watched the man. Gwen rose on an elbow and pushed him away. A muscle quivered on his cheek. There was a simpering smile under the muscle. He got up and began to fuss with his tie. He was not embarrassed. He was medium-sized, puffed in the chest. I noticed his hairy wrists and the garish wrist watch, glittering gold and broad-handed. His face was slick and oily, long-nosed and dead pan.

He said, "Who's this character?"

Gwen didn't answer him. She sat up without covering her breast. I saw the black silk underwear I had bought her for Christmas. She sat there smiling at me, challenging me with her eyes, arrogant and sly.

"Hello, Stevie," she said. "Who let you out so early?"

It was supposed to be funny, always, when she called me Stevie. But I didn't laugh. I was frozen, rooted, shocked. My hands were tight at my sides. My knees shook.

Gwen said something then, but my ears did not pick it up. The man laughed, deep in his throat, a surly laugh. Alongside her on the floor sat a tall glass half full of liquor. Gwen laughed. The glass went up. She was finishing her liquor.

I said, "You're drunk, Gwen. You must be drunk." It was an effort to speak at all. I whispered.

◆

The man stepped forward. His heavy brows knotted and he licked at his upper lip. "You want me to take this jerk apart, baby?"

"Leave him alone," Gwen said. Her words stopped him. He put his fists on his hips and stood there, measuring me. Gwen set down her glass. "Why don't you take a walk, Stevie darling? We can talk about this later."

I said, "Take a walk?"

"You heard her," the man said. "Scram."

I lifted my eyes and stared hard at his face. He was a caricature of a dressed-up shill, a tout, a cheap-John. I told him with my eyes that he wasn't frightening me.

I said, "Keep out of this, gizmo."

He met my eyes brazenly. Gwen was sipping at the other glass now—his glass. She raised her eyes, and when I saw her smile, something died inside me. Suddenly we were alone, Gwen and I. And she was calling me a fool with her brittle little smile.

I said, "I could kill you for this, Gwen."

The man came into focus again when she laughed. His fist came at me. I stepped away and swung. He went down. I saw his hand reach for his hip. I kicked him. Hard. He doubled over. Gwen slid off the couch and bent over him.

"Leave him alone," she said.

I caught at her hand and brought her up. I slapped her face. She cried out, but I slapped her again until my hand hurt. I dropped her arm and she slipped to the floor, sobbing. She fell over him and began to cry, high and hysterically.

I went out of there.

1.45 P.M. Shock. The streets of the city were gray paths before me, concrete corridors leading everywhere and nowhere. I walked uptown slowly. I saw nothing but the inner pictures of confusion and chaos and torment.

When it began to rain, I found a small bar in the upper Forties. There was a clock over the bar and I stared at it as I sipped my bourbon. Two fifteen. I thought of another clock, the archaic relic that stood in Jonas Tripp's reception room. Three hours ago I had started for home to bury all time with Gwen. For Gwen hated clocks. "You're working for a time clock, Stevie," she would say. "You're knocking yourself out for a machine. You can't enjoy life with your eye on the minute hand."

In the beginning we had argued about such things, especially at parties. Sometimes I would leave without her and Ken Sisley would take her home. Sleep was important to me. More important than taking care of Gwen? But I had trusted Gwen. We were in love. There were no other men in her life, I told myself. Not until today.

The man in the striped shirt—who was he? How had Gwen met him? And where? I went back over the activities of the last few months. The party at Mitzi's? It was a small affair in a crowded room. The man in the striped shirt would have stood out there, a living bit-player, a type, a gangster film character.

Where had Gwen met him? She had been going to night classes the past six months, studying oils with a certain Guido Romani who taught a small class on Seventh Avenue. On Tuesdays and Thursdays she left home immediately after dinner. She carried her paintbox and smock. She was excited about her progress with Romani—enthusiastic, eager, sparkling with sudden brightness on those nights when she went to school.

I was usually asleep when she came home. Steve McGrath, the time-clock personality, in bed at eleven and up at seven. Once I had stayed awake, wooed by a Steinbeck book. And on that night she came in at one. I remembered, because I had made up my mind to put the book down at one.

"Stevie darling," she said with a little laugh. Self-conscious or only surprised? "You've been waiting up for me?"

"It's Steinbeck," I said. "This guy can write."

Her eyes told me nothing. She put down her paintbox. When she stood erect I saw her brush the hair away from her face. It was a careless gesture, a normal gesture, yet, somehow, it was not Gwen's. She was thinking. She was planning. She dropped her coat and crossed the room to lean over me and kiss me. And when I pulled her into my lap, she seemed content. The book dropped to the floor.

I said, "How's the female Picasso?"

"Better every day," she laughed. "One of these nights I'll bring home my masterpiece, and won't you be surprised?"

Gwen went to the cupboard and brought out the bourbon. We began to drink the way we drank in earlier days, for the camaraderie, the closeness, the warmth. This was Gwen, my Gwen, the girl I married. Why had she waited so long to give herself to me this way again? For the next hour we were lovers. For the next hour we were young.

But after that night it ended as though it had never begun. Why had she never brought even a small canvas for me to see? A sketch?

What a fool I'd been! And the man in the striped shirt was a symbol of my stupidity.

I left the bar. I would go back to Gwen now. We had revived our love before, when I came out of my shell of habit. Gwen would come back to me, I told myself. Gwen had not yet really left me. I took a cab downtown. I got out at Eleventh Street and bought her a gift, a new paintbox.

Our front windows were dark. My heart sank. I went inside slowly. The door to our flat was open a crack. There was a stillness in the hall, unusual at this hour. At dusk I always heard Ken Sisley's phonograph playing muffled mood music. I missed it now.

The apartment was dark. I reached for the switch and called "Gwen?" tentatively, gently.

Then the light flooded the room. I dropped the paintbox. The man in the striped shirt lay on the floor. His face was no face. He had been beaten. He had been mauled. A stain of blood formed the background for his head. I circled him and went into the small kitchen. A whisky bottle sat on the kitchen sink. There was a half-empty bottle of soda alongside it. The window was open on the fire escape. Somebody could have crept through the kitchen and killed him. Unless Gwen—

"Gwen?" I whispered again. The sound of my voice chilled me. I walked into the bedroom and switched on the light.

Gwen lay on the bed. Her red robe was open. The pattern of it against the figured bedspread made a background of horror for her body. Her dead white body. She had on a black negligee. Matching her robe, her breast was crimson above the heart.

I saw then that Gwen was dead.

5.30 P.M. The kitchen oppressed me. It was a tiny gap between two rooms, lined with a stove, a clock, a refrigerator, a table, a chair enameled red. And over all this the cupboards closed in on me. Gwen had decorated the cupboard doors. She had painted a design of cupids, floating cherubs. I became aware of every crack in the mottled linoleum, every detail in the calendar hanging over the refrigerator: a painted New England farmhouse, and under the picture—"May." And what of May 7—today—Friday? Gwen had circled the date. She had used a lead pencil here, delicately. So that I wouldn't notice the day? So that I might not ask questions?

The Scotch was gone. I moved out of there. I stood at the telephone table in the hall. If I could reach Harvey, he would give me advice, he would help me. The phone rang in the office, but there was no answering voice. Harvey would not be at home. Not tonight. He had told me so. He'd be on his way to Connecticut, to cousin Arthur. I searched my memory for the last name. But this was no moment for remembering.

I fought down my panic. Linda! My hands fumbled the pages of the phone book. And when I found her number and began to dial, my throat went dry. I needed her now. Her voice, steady and calm, braced me.

"Is anything wrong, Steve? You sound upset."

"I am upset. How can I get in touch with Harvey?"

"I don't know. He's up in Connecticut, at his cousin's."

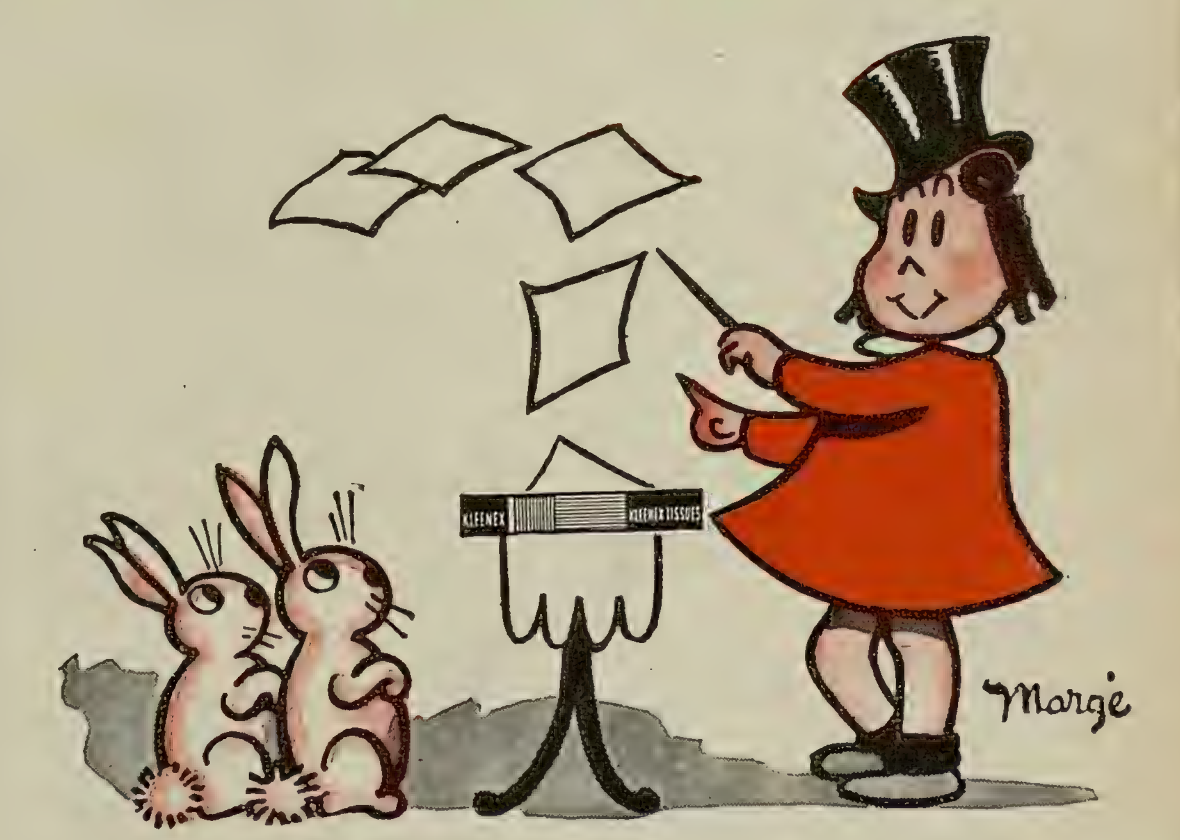
"Arthur? Do you know his last name?"

"It's Arthur all right. But I don't know him."

"Isn't there any way for me to find out? I've got to get to Harv!"

"I could go back to the office and try to find it for you," she said. "Tell

LITTLE LULU



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*T. M. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

me what's happened. Maybe I can help you."

And then I told her. Everything.

"I'm going nuts," I said. "I suppose I'd better give myself up to the police."

Linda's voice rose. "Don't you dare, Steve! Whoever murdered Gwen and that—that man—figured to trap you. You've got time to work, and you're the best locater in the skip-tracing business. Give me a lead to Harvey's cousin. Think," she insisted.

I thought. I put my feet on a mental desk. And it came to me.

I said, "Try the funeral parlors in the area close to the New York line. Try the big towns first. Harvey mentioned the area."

"The locater is back on the ball," she said. "Call me later. Or come up to my apartment."

I put down the phone, steady now, the tremor gone from my hand. Through some magic of her kinship to me, Linda had set me straight. I went into the bedroom. It was an effort to look at Gwen now. I pulled down the blind. I lit the small lamp on the end table near the window. That way she lay in semidarkness and I could try for thought.

Move fast, I told myself. You've got to escape. They'll be coming after you—hunting you down—soon.

◆ I began to search Gwen's dresser. The drawers were a masterpiece of confusion. She had never believed in neatness. The dresser told me nothing. I searched in the closet, pulling her dresses off the hangers, fumbling in pockets. I reached for her paintbox, her little kit. The brushes were hard and stiff. The tiny palette yielded no oil to my probing fingers. She hadn't used these paints in many months. And then I saw a piece of colored paper, half hidden under the tubes. It was a matchcase. On the cover a half-naked dancer lifted her legs in a decorative pose. In red letters, over her head, were the words: The Cellar.

The Cellar? Once, before we were married, Gwen and I had gone there, to stand at the bar, to sip our beers and stare at the characters around us. I stuffed the matchcase into my pocket.

I went into the living room and bent over the man in the striped shirt. My skin crawled as I forced my hands through his clothes. Somebody had cleaned him, plucked him. But there were two pieces of paper in a vest pocket—two theater stubs. I took them with me. I locked the outside door.

LIBERTY

"You gave me cherry; I asked for chocolate!"

I sweated freely now. I might have been digging a grave.

I found myself staring at Ken Sisley's door. Then I was knocking gently. I pushed open the door and went in. The room was empty. But Ken was always home at this hour. He would be playing his records and sipping his gin until he heard me close the door of our flat. Then he would knock and walk in. We were good friends. We expected him.

And where was he now? Ken might have seen the man in the striped shirt. Ken could tell me things.

I stood in the center of his room, measuring the Bohemian disorder. The walls were only partitions, plasterboard and wallpaper. On many an evening I had heard the blare of Ken's phonograph. And he—he must have heard our arguments at dinnertime, the high tremor of Gwen's voice, the uneasy anger of mine. He knew us well, Ken did.

And in the daytime? If Gwen had callers, he must have known about them, remembered their voices.

I went down the stairs. Mrs. Monati saw me at the door.

"Mr. McGrath!" she shouted, coming at me with her hands outstretched, her face full of friendliness and concern. "You are going out? So early? Is anything wrong?"

I said, "Nothing at all, Mrs. Monati. Do you know where Gwen is?"

"She is not upstairs? Then she must have gone out when I went to the store this afternoon. I have been home most of the day." She squeezed my arm. "You have not had supper, is that it? Come, I will give you something. I have escalopini, and my husband is not here tonight. It will serve him right for telephoning me so late that he could not come home. You will eat Luigi's dinner. Come—"

I let her pull me into her kitchen. Her food was good. I ate slowly, listening to her musical voice, wondering how I could ask her about Gwen.

I said, "I can't imagine where Gwen went. She's never done this before."

"Do not worry about her, Mr. McGrath. She perhaps is shopping uptown."

"It's not like Gwen, Mrs. Monati. She's been acting strangely lately."

She was at the stove when I said it. I saw her pause over the percolator.

She said softly, "Tell me, Mr. McGrath—you are unhappy? You and your wife are having trouble?"

I nodded. It would be better to give her the lead.

"I have known about this," she said with a sigh. "I say to myself many months ago, 'Maria, you will see this marriage bust up soon. This girl, she is no longer in love. A woman in love must love her house.' That is how I knew about you and your wife. She never stayed at home."

◆ I looked up from my plate. "Do you mean she goes out every day?"

"Every day." She breathed motherly sympathy at me. "You did not know?"

"I wasn't sure."

"Then I am talking too much. I did not mean—"

"Please," I said. "Whatever you tell me will help me. Gwen and I are going to get a divorce."

"So? There is another man?"

"She denied it," I said.

Mrs. Monati snorted and tapped her finger on the oilcloth. "I, myself, have seen her with this man."

"What does he look like?"

"Why must you torture yourself, Mr. McGrath? What does it matter about the man? It is your wife who is bad. You are wiser to let her go and forget her."

Anger heated me. I shouted at her, "When did you see this man, Mrs. Monati? I've got to know!"

"I will tell you, then," she said. "It was last Monday."

Monday! Gwen should have been in Pine Bush on that day. She had come home on Thursday night, late.

"That was the only time you saw them together?"

Mrs. Monati shrugged expressively. "She must have seen him often. She never stayed at home. Always she left early in the morning. And at night, in the evening, in the afternoon, yes, I saw her at the butcher or the grocery sometimes. But most of the time, no, she did not stay in the house."

"What did he look like?"

"He had on glasses, that is all I can think to tell you."

"He never came here?"

"I tell you I would not know him if he came."

"But others? There were others?"

"There was one, a man, this afternoon. An hour, two hours ago—"

"For Gwen? Are you sure?"

"No—I am not sure. He was on the landing, perhaps for Mr. Sisley. He saw me and came down quickly, perhaps too quickly. He went out."

"Did you get a good look at him?"

"Not good. The hall is dark."

She followed me to the door. I thanked her.

"You Americans are funny people," she said. "You will still search for your wife, is that it? Even if she is bad—very bad?"

"I must find her," I said.

I ran down the stone steps and into the street.

6.20 P.M. I walked through the streets of the Village, on the prowl for Ken Sisley. "He had on glasses, that is all I can tell you." I could think only of the dead man in my apartment, the man in the striped shirt. How many other men had Gwen known?

I phoned her father in Pine Bush. He had not seen her since before Christmas. He had wondered why she didn't come.

I roamed the bars. Ken was a vagrant drinker. I found him, finally, at my friend Mario's. He sat at a dark table in the rear. There was a side door to the street near his table. When he saw me, he made an effort to reach the door casually. I shouted to him and he turned to frown at me. Then he smiled, briefly and with some nervousness. In the pause I reached his table and he sat down with me.

I said, "Are you sober?"

"You can see for yourself I'm stinking. I haven't sold a cartoon in eight weeks. I've been feeding myself with inspiration."

It was not natural for Ken Sisley to explain away his liquor. He was putting on a show for me—an amateur act.

I said, "How long have you been here, Ken?"

"I've been here all afternoon," he said. He was working hard at avoiding my eyes. His face was very pale, too pale for the early evening. "I really don't remember when I walked in. Maybe Mario would remember."

"You're not that drunk, Ken. I need your help. It's important that you help me."

"Help you?" He looked at me squarely and I caught a flicker of fear. Ken had creamy hair and a face to match. His was a blond personality, shaded lightly with undertones of femininity that appealed to certain types of women.

I said, "I want to know what happened up in my apartment this afternoon."

He licked at his lip. I saw his hand tremble on the glass. He lifted the liquor and sipped it uneasily. He tapped the glass on the table and turned my way and grimaced stupidly. "I don't get you," he said. "What are you driving at, Steve? You and Gwen had another fight?"

"Not exactly, Ken. What time did you leave the flat?"

"Noon. I went uptown to try to sell a cartoon. I had lunch with the boys at the Pen and Pencil. Then I came down here and had a couple. I've been downing them ever since."

"Since when?"

"Three."

"You're lying," I said. "You went to your apartment before you came here, didn't you?"

He shook his head stubbornly. I leaned toward him and held his arm. He went soft under my grip.

I said, "Where's your portfolio, bright boy? Has Mario got your portfolio, too?"

Ken tried to get up suddenly. It was a drunken movement.

"Portfolio?" he asked himself. "Must have forgotten it. Better run up to the Pen and Pencil to grab it before some crumb swipes it."

"Don't bother," I said. "I just saw it, Ken. Up in your apartment."

He sat down then. Hard. He ordered more drinks. Mario came over and wiped the table. "You want another hooker, Steve?"

I said, "No more for me, Mario. I've got things to do."

◆

Far up front the door opened and a cop walked in, the fat one who pounded Bleecker Street every night at this time. Mario said something to him. The cop leaned against the bar and accepted a beer. Then he turned and looked our way, over his shoulder. I listened to the pounding of my heart as I faced him. He waved a hand at me. I returned the salute, feeling my muscles go hard and tight.

"That cop, Steve. Do you suppose—?" Ken's eyes were bugged. Terror twitched at his mouth.

I said, "Sit tight, you damned idiot. We'll leave here after the cop walks out. We've got some talking to do, you and I."

To be continued in the next issue.

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bar of the Cyclone

Continued from page 26

As he turned the azimuth circle about, he noticed clear opal cirrus clouds in the upper region of the atmosphere; they were piled up in the blue vault of the heavens and drawn toward a point on the eastern horizon that lay hard on the vessel's bow. The mate gave only passing attention to this rather striking phenomenon, recalling that the barometer was very high and that there had not been the slightest sign of weather for the past six days.

Taking the time of his bearing, he went below to the chartroom and worked out the gyro error, checked it with the master compass, and recorded the results in the logbook. Before he left the chartroom the mate glanced casually at the barometer, noting that its reading had not altered.

Back on the flying bridge, Mr. Pugh paced the deck, reviewing in his mind the ugly scene that had occurred on the quay in Montreal. Things were working out all right, he told himself, so why not let the whole matter go by the board? Why should he stick out his neck and take on the role of holy crusader? Shipowners were all cut from the same cloth, and if a sailor wanted to get ahead in a seagoing career he had to play the game the way they wanted it played. The old man was right; a man had all he could do to look out for himself.

◆

For a moment the mate was tempted to go below and scratch out the entry he had made in the logbook back at St. Peter's Lake. He would initial it to make it legal. But then Mr. Pugh reconsidered; better leave it the way it was, then the old man would have no choice about recommending him for a skipper's berth. Why, damn it, holding an infraction of the law like that over the company's head was good business.

As the sun went down the sky grew dirty gray, and the mate began to search the heavens for stars he might shoot. When his eyes came to bear on the eastern horizon once more, he noticed the clouds there had grown into a dense cirrus veil, below which were a few isolated "cotton" clouds. The sea had taken on a strange slick quality and the vessel no longer felt resilient underfoot. It was as though the sea were crouching, gathering strength to strike. Suddenly a sense of foreboding and anxiety came over the mate, as though he were in a jungle, stalked by an invisible beast.

Intermittent rain squalls blew up, and with the shocking impact of a physical blow it dawned on Mr. Pugh that he had been mentally enumerating the dreaded signs of an approaching cyclone. Hurriedly he made his way down the ladder to the chartroom. His observations were correct: the barometer had begun to fall sharply. Going out to the wing of the bridge he blew his whistle shrilly. The stand-by appeared on the foredeck and the mate yelled for him to break out the bo's'n.

"Tell him," he shouted, "to make sure everything's battened down. We're in for a howler."

The rain squalls were growing more frequent. The cirrus veil on the eastern horizon had become opaque. Increasing in velocity, the wind sent white froth scudding over the water. Abruptly the seas augmented and the SS. Integrity began to pitch, taking spindrift over her bow; it shot into the air, scattering before the wind like particles of spun glass.

Mr. Pugh left the bridge once more, this time making his way to the captain's quarters. The old man was stretched out full length on the cuddy seat, an empty whisky bottle by his limp hand. The mate shook him by the shoulder and Captain McCord opened his bloodshot china-blue eyes for a moment, glanced at the mate, and closed them again.

"Looks bad out there, sir," said Mr. Pugh.

Once more the old man opened his eyes, and the mate could tell by their glaze that the skipper had decided to keep his conscience numbed in alcohol.

"We're heading into a cyclone!" shouted the mate angrily.

Captain McCord made an attempt to rise. Then, falling back on his bunk, he began to snore like an asthmatic old horse.

"Damn it," yelled the mate frantically, "I've got to alter course or we'll head right into the center of it!"

◆

Realizing he was letting valuable time slip by, time in which a quick decision might mean the difference between life and death, Mr. Pugh hurriedly made his way back to the bridge. Already the wind was blowing a full gale, screaming through the ship's rigging with the sound of a giant dynamo. The seas had grown mountainous and confused, hitting the vessel on all sides with such terrific impact that she trembled in every frame and strake of her structure.

Standing with his face directly to the wind, Mr. Pugh took a bearing ten points to the right, where he approximated the storm center lay. As he gazed at the horizon there was no mistaking the bar of the cyclone. It was the densest part of the cirrus veil, appearing as black as the mouth of an endless cave. The position of the ship in relation to the storm track was grave. She lay directly in its path. Mr. Pugh immediately decided to haul the vessel about and get the wind two points on her port quarter. After this he would open her up and run for the right semicircle of the cyclone. Even if the vessel made it, she would still be in the danger zone, but there was no other course to follow.

"I'm just all thumbs today!"

"Let 'er come right," he called to the sailor at the wheel. The seaman put the wheel hard over, and at the same moment the ship rose on a huge sea, hovered there for a moment, then came down in a trough, where she wallowed helplessly.

"She's not answering the helm, sir," yelled the wheelsman hoarsely.

"Hold 'er hard over, damn it."

It had grown pitch dark in the wheelhouse and the rain beat against the windows like hailstones.

"She's not answering," repeated the sailor, peering with frightened eyes into the compass.

"Hold 'er over or we'll never get outa this trough," shouted the mate.

Making his way to the wing of the bridge, the mate was just in time to see the vessel take a green one over the stern. It buried the afterdeck from her poop to the forward end of number three hatch. Mr. Pugh was thrown hard against the bridge rail, where he lay waiting for the vessel to recover herself. It seemed ages before she came back on an even keel.

"Mate!" screamed the helmsman, his voice thick with terror.

Mr. Pugh dashed back into the wheelhouse and found the sailor spinning the wheel as though it had come adrift from its axis. At that moment Mr. Wood, his face screwed up with fright, came out on the bridge.

"She's out of command, chief," shouted Mr. Pugh. "Hook up the emergency steering gear." The wind's intensity had grown so great that the mate could hardly make his voice heard above that of the cyclone.

◆ Mr. Wood, though trembling with fear, cut aft, the mate hard on his heels. As they came out on the boat deck the vessel took a huge sea over her port side. Mr. Pugh and the chief engineer were washed between the fiddley and the midships house, where they lay gasping for breath. On the afterdeck there was a thundering, tearing crash.

The number five port boom was torn loose from its collar. It came crashing down across the starb'rd bulwark. The six-ton steel derrick bent over the side like a wet rag, dragging its gin block in the sea. Struggling to their feet, Mr. Pugh and the chief engineer made a dash for the after steering station. There Mr. Wood climbed down below to the steering-gear room and hooked up the emergency wheel. The helmsman appeared on the poopdeck and took over.

"Hard right," sang out Mr. Pugh, wiping the rain from his eyes.

On the after steering station there was nothing to break the force of the wind. It drove the breath back into the men's lungs until it was almost impossible to breathe. Bent double over the wheel, the helmsman fought to hold the vessel hard over. Each time she pitched, her stern rose high in the air, the screw coming clear of the water and hammering the air with a deafening whir.

"Don't think she's answering, sir," gasped the helmsman.

"Hold 'er," bellowed the mate. "I'm going below for some lashing."

◆ The deck locker was just forward of the steering-gear room and as the mate made his way into it he could see Mr. Wood struggling with a broken telemotor pipe. Fighting to keep his footing in the spilled oil, he worked like mad, all the while crying shamelessly.

"Saints almighty," he was wailing, "she'll never live in this! Not when she's ten inches below her marks."

Mr. Pugh went into the locker and began rapidly unraveling ninethread from a new coil. As he worked he could hear Mr. Wood's shrill keening. There was something both heroic and pathetic about the little man's fear.

"You were right, mate," the chief engineer cried. "They'd drown the lot of us for three thousand dollars. And they call themselves Christians. Oh, saints almighty!"

Abruptly Mr. Pugh became aware of a lull. Though he knew the sea would follow the momentary quiet with increased fury, the mate continued unraveling the line. Then he was thrown hard against the forward bulkhead of the locker. The vessel was standing on her beam's end. For a moment she hovered there as though she were about to capsize. In that terrible moment of suspense the perspiration broke out on the mate's forehead. It seemed as though the steel bulkheads were closing in. He fought back the panic welling up inside him. Slowly the vessel righted herself. Then the seas hit her again and again, like a professional fighter taking advantage of his stunned opponent. Water cascaded down the companionway ladder. Struggling to his feet, Mr. Pugh made for the steering-gear room. Mr. Wood, his nose bleeding badly, was still working away at the parted pipe, the tears rolling down his fear-contorted face.

"Clear the hell outa here," screamed the mate.

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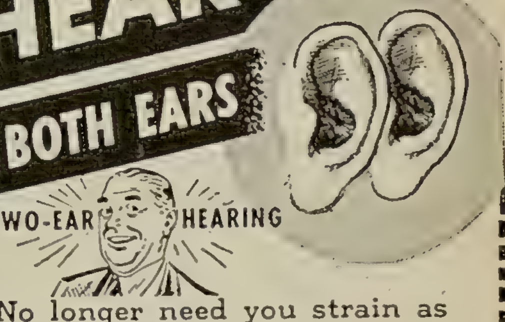

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"It's not fixed yet," wailed Mr. Wood.

Then Mr. Pugh remembered the sailor at the helm above. It would have been humanly impossible to hold fast to the wheel with those seas breaking over the stern. Hand over fist he went up the ladder. The sailor lay dead at the base of the wheel. He had lashed himself fast with his belt, and the thousands of tons of water that had descended on him had broken every bone in his body.

Quickly the mate cut him loose and rigged a bowline to several spokes of the wheel. Swinging the helm hard over, he lashed himself in a position where the wheel could not return midships without striking him in the chest. Now it seemed as though there was no interval between the seas. Everything that was not battened down went over the side, including the body of the dead sailor. Stunned and hardly realizing just what was taking place, Mr. Pugh held the wheel hard over.

As he stood there the same thought beat through his mind. He heard it in the deafening scream of the cyclone, in the pounding seas, in the rain beating against his face and into his eyes.

"Ten inches of freeboard," the wind howled.

"Ten inches of freeboard," the seas thundered.

"Ten inches of freeboard," the rain beat out on the steel deck.

◆ It was when Mr. Pugh thought the wind and rain were about to tear his eyeballs from their sockets that the chief engineer got the pipe below squared away. The second officer and the bo's'n climbed up to the after steering station, and cutting the mate loose from his lashings, helped him below. After resting there several minutes, Mr. Pugh made his way through the shaft alley to the engine room, then up to the bridge by way of the midships ladders. With the telemotor working again, he got the wind two points on the vessel's port quarter, and slowly, very slowly, the SS. Integrity fought her way out of the bar of the cyclone and into its right semicircle.

As Mr. Pugh clung to the wheelhouse grabrail, his face pressed to the window, it seemed to him that every muscle in his body had been wrenched. His right shoulder was numb and he kept moving it to see if it had been broken. Abaft the wheel, the pale greenish light of the binnacle illuminating the lower portion of his grim, set face, stood the fo'c's'le mate of the sailor who had been killed. Only the terrible howling of the gale and the incessantly battering seas could be heard in the wheelhouse.

◆ All through the night the dangerously overloaded vessel labored, sinking into troughs from which the mate thought she would never emerge. At one point a steel plate on the port side of the bridge buckled under a heavy sea and afterward, each time the vessel came down on her keel, the plate vibrated, sending out a report like the distant boom of a cannon. The sound was melancholy and forlorn and it badly strained the already jangled nerves of the haggard men on the bridge.

LIBERTY

"Anything interesting happen in town today, Junior?"

By dawn the bar of the cyclone had passed well astern. In the dull ghostly light of the new day the battered vessel looked like a cadaver. Mr. Pugh, though the seas were still high and the vessel by no means out of danger, turned all hands to to clear away the wreckage.

And now that the seas had moderated, the strange feel of the vessel underfoot became more apparent than ever. It seemed as though the for'rd and after ends had slightly different motions. Near the midships house Mr. Pugh noticed that the cant of the deck was peculiarly out of shape. Moving over to the bulwark, he saw a thin black line; it extended across the rail and over the deck. Abruptly Mr. Pugh became filled with the same exhausting apprehension he had felt at the cyclone's height. He was actually afraid to confirm the sickening suspicion that crept into his mind. Finally he forced himself to examin the thin line more closely. It extended down through number one two, and three strakes, disappearing below the water line. Mr. Pugh' first impulse was to cut for th bridge and turn in the genera alarm.

But controlling this impulse, h leaned back against the bulkhead lit a cigarette and drew the smok deep into his lungs. If the vesse broke in two, it would be without warning; both ends would dive fo the bottom like anchors come adrift from their shackles. Under his breath he cursed the port captain the old man up in his room drunk the ten inches of freeboard the vessel lacked, the five hundred tons o extra grain she should never hav taken.

Recovering his self-control, Mr Pugh climbed up to the boat deck and went into Mr. Wood's cabin The chief engineer was stretched out on his bunk, both sides of his body tommed up by "Dutch wives" to keep him from rolling each time the vessel heeled. Mr. Pugh expected the little engineer to grow hysterical when he told him of the crack in the vessel, but Mr. Wood, perhaps because he was physically and emotionally exhausted, bore the shock rather well.

"Break out all hands," said the mate dully. "Tell them to stand by to abandon ship."

"No lifeboat'll ever live in these seas," Mr. Wood groaned.

"We've got no other choice," said the mate.

Muttering something under his breath, Mr. Wood headed for the engine room.

◆ In less than two minutes all hands were standing by on the starb'rd side of the boat deck, appearing in their life-jackets somewhat like a group of grotesque hunchbacks.

Each man's skin had taken the soiled gray color of the sky, and the expressions on all their faces seemed strangely alike. To Mr. Pugh, who had seen a great deal of death during the war, this was not unusual, for he had long ago noticed that death at sea never came with complete suddenness. First it carefully prepared a man, destroyed his individuality with fear, made him look like every other frightened man about him—like every other frightened man who had suffered a violent death a thousand years before him.

Mr. Pugh's macabre reverie was interrupted by the chief engineer.

"Mr. Mate," the chief said pleadingly, "the seas are moderating. Maybe we could hold off a little longer before we put the boats over the side."

The mate motioned to Mr. Wood and led him forward to the boat-deck rail. Number three hatch covers and beams had been lifted clear of their moorings, having broken through the three heavy tarpaulins battening them down. For some time the hold had been shipping water. And as the wet grain expanded in its irrepressible struggle for life, everything restricting its growth was relentessly pushed aside or crushed.

As the mate and the chief engineer stood by the rail a sharp report arose from below. The crack in the vessel widened and worked its way between the after part of number three hatch and the midships bulkhead.

Wheat poured out of the crack like blood pouring from a wounded beast.

"She's breaking up!" shrilled Mr. Wood, his terrified voice carrying across the boat deck.

All hands cut for the boats, turned to removing the covers and strongbacks. From his place at number three boat, Mr. Wood screamed, "The old man's not here, Mr. Mate!"

Now that the boats were swung out, each man having taken the place assigned to him on the Station Bill, the excitement subsided and the men went about their jobs with determined efficiency.

"Stand by for a blast on the whistle before you lower away," sang out the mate.

◆

Dashing up the ladder, he went into the chartroom to get the logbook. It was not in its usual place beside the chronometer. At the book rack he tossed almanacs and tide tables in all directions. Pulling the big chart drawers out, he dumped their contents on the deck. Still no logbook. He realized all at once that the captain had gotten to the chartroom first. Wild with rage, Mr. Pugh piled into the old man's quarters. There sat Captain McCord, sober as a judge, his feet propped up on the desk and the ever-present cigar clenched between his teeth.

"I want the logbook." There was tense hatred showing in the mate's voice.

"What for?" asked the old man.

"You know damn well what for!" bellowed Mr. Pugh. "If I ever get out of this alive, I'm going to blow the lid off the whole damn filthy racket."

Captain McCord reached down and pulled open the top drawer of his desk. The incriminating logbook was in it and beside it lay the ship's revolver. Mr. Pugh stood beside the old man as though he were rooted there. Nothing could be heard in the cabin but his own labored breathing. Suddenly he lunged forward and yanked the logbook from the drawer. At that moment he expected the old man to take hold of the gun and blast away at him. But Captain McCord did not even remove his feet from the desk; sat there puffing away peacefully at his cigar.

"The boats're ready, sir," said the mate, the hatred having gone from his voice. "Sparks contacted a vessel about eighty miles off. She'll pick us up."

"Go on," said the old man. "I'll follow after you."

◆

Mr. Pugh left the captain's quarters. In the wheelhouse he let go a long blast on the ship's whistle, then made his way to the boat deck, where he supervised the lowering away of both lifeboats. When they were water-borne he gave orders for number one boat to shove off, then he slid down the after falls of number three boat. Taking hold of the painter, he tried to keep the boat alongside as they waited for the old man. The lee the ship provided was poor and the seas drove the lifeboat against the vessel's side, threatening to smash her to pieces.

When the skipper appeared on the main deck, the mate yelled for him to look alive lest they all go down. At that moment a sea drove the frail boat against the vessel's side and both falls came loose. Now only the painter kept the boat from going adrift. Another sea hit her and she began to drift astern.

"The painter's parted!" cried Mr. Pugh. "Out oars."

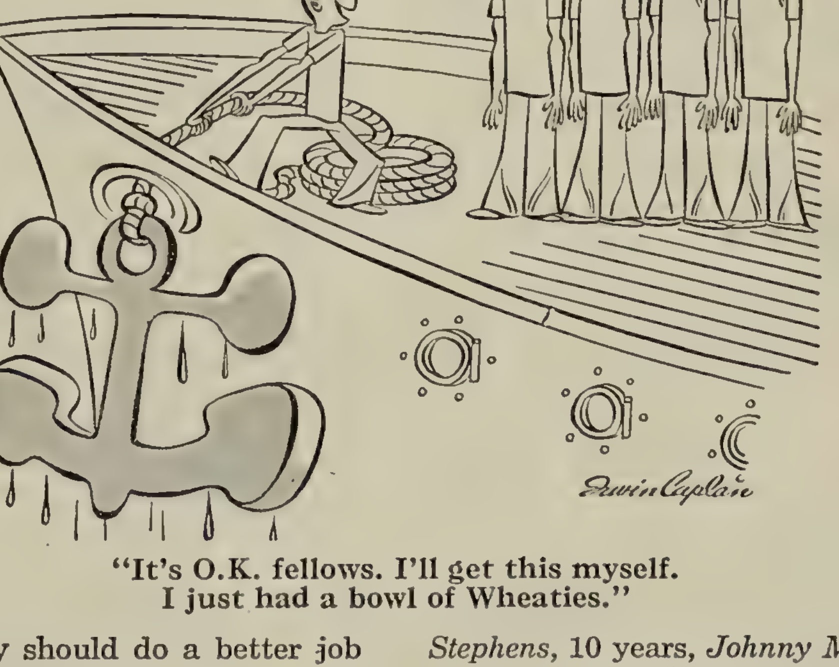
Bending their backs in unison, all hands rowed frantically against the seas. Finally they began to close on the ship's stern and Mr. Pugh, standing in the bow, took in the painter in order to have it ready to heave up to the old man. But when he came to the "bitter end" of the line, he stood there gazing at it dumbly. Captain McCord had severed the rope with a knife.

◆

The captain was now standing on the flying bridge, bareheaded, his shoulders hunched against the wind. Only then did the mate realize how utterly futile had been his attempt to save the SS. Integrity and her skipper. Fighting the sea was a sailorman's profession; it was a task that took all the skill and bravery he could muster. How in heaven's name could a man fight man's greed at the same time?

"Way enough," Mr. Pugh called despondently to the sailors. All hands stopped rowing and the lifeboat once more drifted astern.

Several cable lengths away from the ship the boat hove to and the seamen rigged the sea anchor. Now they boated their oars and stood by, watching. The stricken vessel was settling on an even keel. She wasn't going to break in two: she was going down like a lady. Soon nothing but her topmast was visible. With a little bow, that, too, slipped beneath the sea. Rising and falling on the lessening swell, the silent men and their mate waited rescue. ◆ ◆



"It's O.K. fellows. I'll get this myself.
I just had a bowl of Wheaties."

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NO GIRL FOR McGUCKEN

Continued from page 17

knows him, so I had him phone. He said this old fellow agreed to be at Sherer's Corners. Name of Joe Owen. He'll show us where to camp and sort of get us started. That's all we need, for life is simple in God's hallowed outdoors. You know, Ernie," he added, "I feel the urge to dabble in cookery again."

"Let us give thanks, Berwyn. You're chairman of that committee."

"First thing," he proposed, "we'll set up our new stove and I'll get busy at steak and crepes Suzette to celebrate our new life while you put up the tent, eh?"

"You're positive, Berwyn, you aren't going to be lonesome for love?"

"I wouldn't look twice at a school of mermaids." Berwyn laughed for the first time in four days and, reaching over, gave me a poke in the ribs. "Ernie, old tomato, you were always so right. What good's being hot-blooded, eh?" He snapped his fingers. "Women!"

"Chum," I acknowledged, "I detect a new glint in your eye; that spring returned to your step. I doubt Miss Wisconsin Lakes herself could make you with a hammer and saw. Now throw away that matrimonial measuring tape and you'll really be free."

Berwyn whipped the pages from his pocket. He opened them, skimmed How to Choose Your Wife, then, on the opposite page, How to Choose Your Husband, and lifted them for tearing—

"No-o." He refolded the pages. "It'd be like destroying the key to Fort Knox. These quizzes might prove open-sesame to some groping couple up here where men are unshaven. This it?" he asked as I slowed and turned the car and trailer into a clearing with a gasoline pump and a log cabin.

"It's Sherer's Corners. Maybe Joe Owen's hoisting one inside."

◆

Berwyn got out of the car and walked quite steadily to the cabin and entered. I sat smoking and waiting, and when he failed to emerge in a few minutes I thought of going after him; but just as I stepped out of the car a dog-eared rattletrap came flapping along the highway and turned in and expired. A long-legged kid dismounted and called:

"You Berwyn McGook?"

I realized it was a girl. She wore denim pants and a blue shirt and her red hunter's cap controlled a crop of bouncy straw-colored hair. She was tall and quite slender, although the denims were snug at the hips and the shirt wasn't slack where it shouldn't be. She came briskly toward me, offering a brown hand.

"Hi," she smiled in a voice like happy bells. "So you're the McGook? Or haven't I got the name right?"

"I'm Ernie Pfeiffer," I explained. "Mr. McGucken is—" and I saw Berwyn coming out of the store.

"Give the kid back her nickel, Ernie," he sang out. "'Tis indeed Sherer's Corners. Joe Owen will be here anon."

"Joe Owen—" the girl began.

"To your dolls, sis. I'm the big bull of the woods, and every morning I eat a teen-ager." Waving her away, Berwyn poised his hand in mid-air as it came to him that she must be all of twenty-three. He halted. His look was like Balboa discovering the Pacific.

"Hello, girl. I'm the great Berwyn McGucken."

Gradually she took on the sunniest smile. "I'm Josephine Owen. I had a phone call—"

"Josephine? But lovely! Ernie," he said, "do you realize I never in all my moonlit experience had a Josephine?" One brindled eyebrow lifted. "Pardon me, Josephine," he told her, "but have you ever felt unwanted; when you were a child, thought you didn't belong to your folks; since growing up, maybe wondered if men didn't care?"

◆

It was Question Six from How to Choose Your Wife, but Josephine didn't know and looked puzzled. "No. Well—I guess I have. But—"

"Don't be offended," Berwyn urged with his shiny choirboy look. "At what age, Josephine, did you first park off the road with a boy? In high school, say, after a dance? Or not until college?" That was Question Nine, but Berwyn was briefing it.

"Why, I don't remember the very first—" Josephine was darkly tanned but she suddenly went tanner.

"Skip it for now," Berwyn said kindly. "Tell me, Josephine, why do you choose to wear those pants? Perhaps you have no brothers? No," he verified as she shook her head. "Father living? He is? Well, do you get, shall we say, assurance from that costume? Find it thrilling to swagger around like a male?"

Josephine frowned and kicked a stone. "I suppose I ought to dress more feminine. Mother says I don't look a bit—"

"Yes, you do," I put in. "Locally. Berwyn," I hinted, "aren't you forgetting? You've been reborn. This is Josephine Owen who will announce when her dad's coming to guide us."

"Dad?" she said. "He's in Oshkosh, running his sporting-goods store. I'm J-O, Jo, for Josephine Owen, all the guide there is in forty square miles of wild-life refuge. Leroy Thompson phoned me to look out for you two."

Silence in that country can become almost ear-shattering.

"Hermit, Berwyn," I reminded. "You're here to become a hermit."

He passed a hand over his forehead. "Ernie, pal, thank heaven for you." He reeled to the car door and slumped within. "Temptations of St. Anthony!" Berwyn muttered as he twisted the sun shield so he couldn't see Jo. "Tell her there's no position open, Ernie. Send her packing, Ernie!"

◆

Jo Owen's big brown eyes were round. "What's wrong with the cherub? Send me packing? When I— Ernie," she appealed slowly, "can Angel-eyes be inferring I might want to *marry* with him, or something?"

"Eleven notebooks full of gals have tried it," I nodded. "Not that Berwyn's been unwilling. Nay, he's searched the whole U. S. without finding a suitable mate."

"Suitable? Who does he think— What would be suitable?"

"Berwyn uses a — er— scientific means of evaluation. No girl has ever assayed right. On the evaluation-of-husbands quiz," I added, "Berwyn scores ninety-six."

Jo eyed him a moment, then returned to the front of the car. "With me, Ernie, your McGook scores nothing. What's he good for? Can he skin a deer?"

"A deer? I don't suppose Berwyn's ever tried."

"Or grab a muskie out of shallow water and whang him to death against a tree? Could he tame a bear and a young moose, like I have? How many wolf bounties has he ever collected? That Park Avenue wolf!" Jo Owens added witheringly so Berwyn could hear.

"Thanks, Jo, for coming," I said, offering my hand. "No doubt you're in a hurry. We'll be O.K."

She looked mentally going around. But her chin set and gradually her lovely eyes cleared. She stared at the sun shield Berwyn still sat behind, and frowned.

"Leroy Thompson asked me to show you where to camp. And I will," she decided. "It'll be dark in an hour, Ernie, so get in your car and follow me, and when I point out the tracks, you turn in first so I can drive out."

She started for her car, then paused. "Tell Jack the Ripper he may score ninety-six at an afternoon musicale but I challenge him to last up here in moose country!"

She coaxed her motorized scrappile alive, turned around, and went flapping up the highway. I followed, and when she stopped I drove into faint tracks among the trees. For half an hour while we bumped deeper into the forest, Berwyn jounced limply beside me set-faced and silent.

When our trailer coupling broke in sight of the lake, I stopped and got out. So did Jo Owen. "Guess you'll have to pack your stuff the rest of the way," she said, examining it. "I'll take these pieces of pin home and maybe I can weld them. If not, I'll pound out a new one."

"You will?" Berwyn asked, joining us.

She deigned to glance at him. "Certainly. We have a forge. There's our cottage, straight across the lake, the only one on Quichibogoma." Jo pointed. "Yonder on that rise, Ernie, is where you pitch your tent. By the way, do either of you Dan'l Boones cook?"

"Berwyn does. We're having crepes Suzette on our new stove and a steak out of the refrigerator," I told her.

Jo's eyebrows stayed up a moment. "Fine," she said carelessly. "Well, Ernie, take care of the bull of the woods. See you." She got in her car and, as there wasn't space to turn around, went roaring backward toward the highway.

◆

Berwyn watched until Jo vanished in the twilight, then came to where I was unlashing the tarpaulin on our trailer

"What a goddess! She can even forge coupling bolts!"

I gave him a severe look. "Now, Berwyn, remember—"

"Ernie, my life's been turned over like a waffle. What regal scorn! The way she said I score nothing by her test—can't skin a muskie or whang a deer against a tree!" Gripping my shoulders, Berwyn thrust his face close. "Did you sense her yearning for the rugged, intrepid type? Precisely what I am!"

Letting me go, he pulled out the psychiatrist's magazine articles.

He turned his pages to peruse Choose Your Husband. "Ought to be something on adaptation to a new environment. Almost seems a flaw. Nearest question: 'Is he a man of action?' Of course I am, without a scintilla of doubt."

"Huh?" I said.

Berwyn rose, tucking the sheets in his pocket. "For years, Ernie, I've tested girls to determine whether they could meet my requirements. Abruptly we find the reverse. Jo Owen thinks *I* can't make the grade in *her* great outdoors."

He snapped his fingers. "Egad, I'll prove to her I am the big bull of the woods!" With a lusty jerk he unveiled our trailer. "What," Berwyn demanded, "is there about woods?"

While I set up the tent he worked at assembling our stove. It was the latest thing for campers, but we couldn't find the instruction sheet, and on account of darkness now, Berwyn had to assemble by flashlight. Seems that in packing the trailer he had mistaken our lantern wicks for rags and thrown them away. What he finally put together of the stove had the burners facing the ground, which struck us as awkward.

◆

Of course we had ample light once we started the campfire, but it was too close to the tent. Luckily I had a blanket at hand, so only the left-front fly burned, and the blanket. But even if we'd had lanterns to find wood for another fire, I doubt if our steaks would have been edible. The battery that ran our new portable refrigerator had cracked from a hard bump. And the refrigerator top had jounced off. Our first-aid kit must have got tossed and come down on the edge of the refrigerator, which smashed the iodine bottle, which emptied all over the steaks. So Berwyn took my new rod and reel and went whistling off through the trees to cast us in a tasty mess of fish.

We dined on crackers, cheese, and cold baked beans.

At last we were stretched out for sleep and Berwyn was making an inventory of things concerning Josephine Owen.

Take swimming, he said. No doubt Jo expected him to be a washout as a swimmer. Ha-ha! She didn't know he had won second in the plunge on the frosh team at Ohio. As to fishing—

"Berwyn," I interrupted, "do you think we'll ever find my new sixty-dollar reel?"

"You'd better dive for it, Ernie. I can't keep my eyes open under water. That reel," he complained, "wasn't properly fastened on the rod. All I did was to give a hard cast and the reel sailed away in the night. I counted eleven before I heard it splash. So that's where you search, Ernie, eleven seconds out."

He began recalling bits of woods lore from writers like Fenimore

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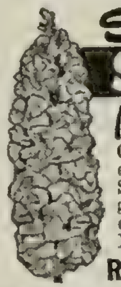

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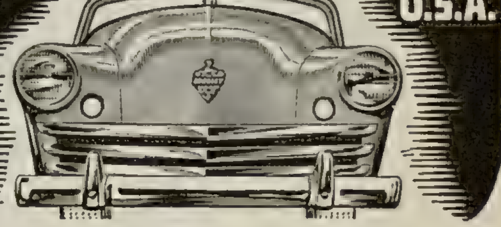

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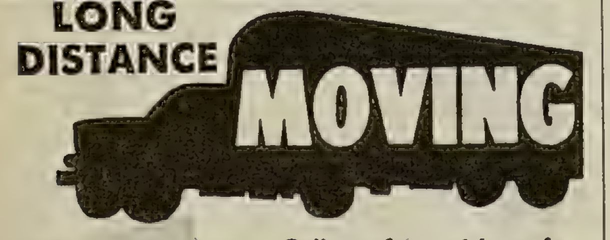

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NO GIRL FOR McGUCKEN

Continued from page 67

Cooper and W. H. Hudson, but of a sudden he broke off. "Ernie!"

I knew what he meant. Outside there were Things Walking. Then they'd stop. You could hear predatory breathing. One snorted, then another snorted, then several pawed the ground.

"Berwyn, your .22. We'll sell our lives dearly!"

"It's in the car," he groaned. "Where's the flashlight?"

As I switched it onto four deer looking like statues in Elks Club lobbies, Berwyn found our patented moose call and gave a terrific honk. In one jump they vanished.

◆

It wasn't a very restful night. You'd be dozing and hear stealthy footfalls and sometimes ferocious animals would be so close you'd swear they were breathing down your neck. Berwyn would blast the moose call and thank heaven it frightened them away. A hundred times I wished we had pitched the tent where Jo said we should, but Berwyn had pointed out this was nearer to our trailer, and the wide path made it a nice tent floor.

At five A.M. loud yells and whacks on the tent wall unshucked Berwyn and me from our sleeping bags in panic. Outside, Jo Owen in her swim suit and a short jacket was doing an Indian dance and now and then whacking her canoe paddle on the tent.

"Up with the sun, O pioneers! I wondered if you got burned out last night when your tent flared up," she admitted. "So I paddled over to find out and to join your morning plunge."

We went swimming in ice water without bottom. Jo and I dived in search of my fishing reel, and just when she brought it up, Berwyn, twenty yards away, went "Glub-glub!" and vanished beneath the waves. We got him ashore and draped over a fallen tree and pumped him empty. Then Jo put the stove together right and I found some pork chops in our refrigerator still good, so she fried them and made crisp brown flapjacks and ate six to my four and Berwyn's three.

"You boys want the best fishing the first day?" Jo asked as we policed camp. "There's some portaging to get there. Maybe you'd rather wait till you're toughened up."

Berwyn gave me a private leer. "Whang-leather, my girl, is already tough. Sure you can take it if it gets rugged?"

Portaging, I learned, is for piano movers. We toted that canoe farther than we sat in it, Berwyn and I wearing the thing like a long green hat while Jo led the way carrying the fishing tackle. We did catch fish, after Jo had her limit of walleyes and we'd caught the canoe, tree branches, and the seat of my trousers. Then Berwyn hooked a muskie but fell out of the boat and it went away.

Jo proved a buoyant companion and her ready laugh was like silver bells tinkling down a long corridor. She knew the outdoors like I know the Palmer House bar, and she knew concertos and books too and she'd written amateur plays. Denim pants, slim capable arms, brown eyes and all, Jo wasn't mannish, but a morsel.

You had to admire Berwyn, and I kept watching to see if Jo did, but she stayed sunnily noncommittal. Berwyn was game all the way, even when Jo had to cut his thumb to get the hook out while I pressed his head down between his knees so he wouldn't faint.

Occasionally Berwyn dropped a casual question from the psychiatrist's magazine article, like Five, was Jo unduly vain? or Twenty-four, would kiddies cause her to neglect her husband? She looked puzzled but always returned candid answers.

◆

"Well, Freud," I said that night, "how's her score?" But he was already asleep.

We'd promised to paddle across the lake for an early-morning dip at Jo's, but we didn't wake up until nine. In our hurry we stove a rock hole in the canoe, so while I paddled like the River Belle racing to St. Louis, Berwyn bailed with his hat. When we got there, Jo's dad, just in from Oshkosh, said she had given us up and gone off with the game warden. Berwyn was pretty irked, especially when Dad Owen chuckled that the warden had always said he was going to marry Jo. Mrs. Owen came out of the house to report that before they drove off to Hardwood the warden had mentioned an errand to the jewelry store.

Dad Owen said Jo could easily fix our canoe and to take another one. He and Mrs. Owen were cordial, but Berwyn was acting sulky, so we went home.

"What would that warden want at the jewelry store?" he growled.

I shrugged. "Maybe they sell solitaires."

Early in the afternoon Berwyn said we needed to drive to Hardwood for supplies. But Jo and the warden weren't in the jewelry store or anywhere else, and coming back Berwyn slumped in the seat and said hell, any sensible man would stick to hermiting.

Somehow we followed wrong tracks into the woods and got lost. Berwyn said he knew what to do and got his .22 rifle from the back seat, and every ten seconds he shot. His box of cartridges was almost gone when Jo and the warden found us.

This warden was a tremendous young Norski, handsome even with three days' beard, and I didn't like him either. He said we were yoost couple tamfools and by gar he was arresting Berwyn for shooting in a wild-life refuge. But Jo said please, Hjalmar, we only had three cartridges left, so Hjalmar put them in his pocket and finally we got back to camp.

Still aching from yesterday, I announced a quiet evening at home. Berwyn agreed a bit too readily and went off in the canoe toward the Owens'. Before dawn, someone groaning woke me up and there was Berwyn dragging himself into the tent. His Hollywood rogue shirt hung in tatters from the shoulder yoke, his slacks were torn and loafers gouged, and by the flashlight I saw he wore double parentheses marks of weariness under each eye.

"I foughda bear. *Kachoo!*" Berwyn said, and collapsed.

He wasn't really hurt, just scratched up a little and fast developing a hard cold. While I doctored him he kept sneezing and telling me about the evening.

◆

The warden had departed before Berwyn got to the Owens'. After greeting him, Jo disappeared and came back in a white summer dress with a swirling skirt and short sleeves, and Berwyn said she was more beautiful than Elaine, the Maid of Astolat in King Arthur. He said after Mr. and Mrs. Owen went to bed he and Jo danced to records a while, then sat in the porch swing watching the lake. Every now and then Berwyn casually asked another questionnaire question and quickly memorized Jo's answer. On Question Eight, "Do you close your eyes when a man unexpectedly kisses you?" Berwyn said he'd have to deduct six points.

"Fast work," I told him. "You mean Jo closes her eyes?"

"She slabbed me. *Kachoo!* Cubba goffee, Erdie," he begged.

As Berwyn started paddling home, fog rolled over the lake. He'd already been lost once today, so turned back, but the house lights were out. So he decided to sleep in the Owens' woodshed. Mrs. Owen had given him a comb of honey for our breakfast pancakes and some bread and other stuff, and after an hour Berwyn woke up feeling somebody close by and put his hand right on the bear's snout as it lapped up our honey.

Berwyn yelled and there was pandemonium. The Owens rushed out in their nightclothes, and he said what sickened him was Jo's laughter. He said she got almost hysterical until her mother sharply asked if she was trying to wreck her life.

"Well, she wrecked id," Berwyn vowed. "I'b ovver robbadz, Erdie. *Kachoo!* So hep be, id's fiddished!"

But he fell asleep with one arm affectionately over my empty sleeping bag. And there was that photograph of Jo he'd dropped at the tent entrance.

◆

Next morning I paddled across the lake to head Jo off in case she was coming for an early dip. Also to try to prevent their lives being wrecked.

At breakfast with the Owens I reported Berwyn just fine, after which there was a strained silence. Later Jo and I went for a hike and she said she was awfully sorry she'd laughed. She said Berwyn and the bear and the honey had looked excruciating, but afterward she hadn't been able to sleep.

"For crying?" I said.

Jo slipped her hand under my arm and while we walked thirty feet she stared at the ground. I saw little diamonds glistening on her lashes. "Yes, for crying. Darn him, Ernie."

We walked on, and she said, "Tony's just a tame bear. I raised him from a cub. And he adores honey."

"You—uh, did? Honestly?"

Jo's nod made her hair bounce on her shoulders that fetching way. "Of course. I raised Moosie, too. He's almost grown now but he doesn't mind humans. He'll eat out of my hand."

"You mean a moose will?" I exclaimed.

Jo's smile lacked its usual sunniness. She went to a big tree, broke off two large flakes of bark and fitted them together. When she had them just right she blew between them, and the harsh penetrating groan made me jump. Jo repeated the sound, then we waited.

In about a minute I saw what looked like an Automat hatrack moving among the trees. This half-grown moose comes cautiously nearer, and finally, eying me narrowly, nibbled moss right out of Jo's hand. She patted his muzzle and he loped back into the woods.

It took me quite some blinking to reduce my eyes to normal. Jo laughed. "Can you imagine, Moosie

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loves beer and whisky! He's tame, like the bear. Of course Berwyn must never know, Ernie. He'd be awfully humiliated about the other night.

"Ernie," she appealed, "why does Berwyn ask me all those queer questions? Are they connected with that evaluation you said he's used in seeking a wife?"

I had brought the quizzes along just in case, and handed them over. Of course Jo said the whole idea was ridiculous. But when we got back to the house she tore off the How to Choose Your Husband page and found a pencil and sat away from me, jotting some figures.

"Well? How's he batting?" I asked.

She gave a Mona Lisa smile, folded the sheet, and stored it down her shirt front. "I'll make some soup, Ernie, for you to take Berwyn. Tell him I'll come to see him in the morning."

She did, and Berwyn, feeling retty good again, treated her like the head slave treated Cleopatra. We all went fishing and had a fine day. Had another the next, canoeing through a chain of lakes and cooking our supper out. That evening, coming home, I was so bushed that I went to sleep in one end of the canoe. I half awakened when they carefully shifted, to sit together, then I conscientiously resumed my dream.

When we reached camp it was plain that something had gone very wrong. The lovers weren't speaking. Berwyn jumped out of the canoe and stalked toward our tent. I hesitated, then, as I pushed the canoe out, I said, "Thanks for everything, Jo. Good night."

She stabbed the lake with her paddle. "Good-*by!*"

Up at the tent I demanded what they had quarreled about.

"She scores me a measly sixty-one," Berwyn snapped. "You know very well I make ninety-six on that Husband quiz!" He added a cuss-word about the entire feminine gender and slid into his sleeping bag and turned his face away.

As I blew out the lamp I felt very sorry indeed that Jo and Berwyn were unsuited for mating.

◆

Next morning I discovered Berwyn already up and dressed and devoting himself to a fresh fifth of rye. He was very difficult, acting as if I had ranted until he'd agreed oh, all right, he'd come up here in the woods just to please me. How do you like that? I said some sharp things about matrimonial guessing games played by dopes who expect a dream girl. Berwyn said O.K., since I considered him a dope we might just as well break camp and start home. I said O.K., dope, we would.

HENRY BOLTINOFF

LIBERTY

"Next!"

I couldn't find my swimming trunks, so ran down to the lake raw for my last dip. Splashing around, I hoped collecting firewood to cook breakfast would brighten Berwyn's mood. Later I was just wading out, when there on the bank, watching me suspiciously, I see that hatrack, Moosie.

It gave me a coronary flutter. I held out my hand as if I had moss like Jo fed him. "Here, Moosie, Moosie. So—boss."

He pawed, and I didn't like his carnivorous glare. H'm, I thought, *is* this Moosie? If it was somebody else, we hadn't met.

Never shifting his eyes, he backed to our camp clearing, then turned and went to Berwyn's bottle of rye. In a flash I understood, for Berwyn had left the bottle, almost full, standing on a rock. Now it was on the ground on its side, empty.

Jo had said Moosie was no fellow to take a drink or leave it alone. And here he had downed Berwyn's rye.

Still plainly guarding me, he nuzzled the bottle around like a pinwheel. This flung out more drops, which Moosie deftly lapped up. Then he came back to the water's edge and snorted and pawed with his very evident race bigotry at the slow boil.

Afraid he'd come in the lake for me, I made like a statue. So did Moosie, head cocked, eyes a tipsy sheen.

At last I gambled on a shout. "Berwyn! Chase this moose away, will you?"

He heard me and came running, until he spied the critter and dropped his firewood. Even at that distance I could see Berwyn's face spread half again as wide. Gulping, he took me in, then Moosie. Finally he spied his empty bottle. The repeat sag of Berwyn's jaw proved comprehension.

"My rye! Why'd you let him—"

"Please, Berwyn. Please," I said, "drive him away or something."

You could see Berwyn think. He turned and legged it out of sight, but soon reappeared. He had our patent moose call which the salesman back on Wabash Avenue, Chicago, had declared was sure-fire. Berwyn gave several loud honks—and things happened.

◆

Wheeling, Moosie discovered him. Snorting harder, he carefully lined Berwyn up with a tree. Then he charged like a furry streamliner hitting a hundred and fifteen between Omaha and Kansas City.

"Yow!" Berwyn dropped the patent moose call and sort of jumped, and in a flash he was dangling like a Christmas-tree ornament fifteen feet off the ground.

"Keep him distracted, Berwyn! I'll get the—" But I remembered we had no cartridges for his rifle.

So I stayed knee-deep in the lake and Berwyn stayed dangling in his tree. Moosie prowled about angrily, and when he stepped on the moose call and it honked, he became even angrier.

"Get rid of him!" Berwyn shouted. "There's a porcupine on the trunk here. What if this branch cracks?"

I didn't know how to get rid of Moosie. Uglier than ever, he went to Berwyn's tree, put his horns against it, and pushed. Getting a little dizzy, he quit that to lean against the trunk for some thinking. Plainly three sheets in the wind, Moosie crossed his front legs like a drunk against a lamppost—but I never tell that, because people just sneer.

How long I waited I don't know—two hours, or anyhow twenty minutes. Berwyn's in his tree and I'm in the lake. Conferring back and forth, we couldn't reach agreement because every scheme offered safety for one but murder for the other. Then of a sudden we heard the peculiar flapping sound that could only be Jo Owen's car doddering through the woods.

The motor died. Berwyn was peering through the foliage for Jo, as anxious as I was to warn her. I had retreated to waist-deep in the lake.

"Ernie," Jo sounded sad, "I brought you a new coupling pin for your trailer."

Berwyn yelled, "Look out, Jo!"

Moosie straightened. Turning as if he saw someone among the trees, he lowered his chandelier for another mail-train charge. Berwyn, in desperation lest Jo be gored, dropped out of his tree and forked Moosie's back.

That was one surprised critter. He carried Berwyn ten feet and stopped so abruptly that Berwyn went "Phoo!" when the antlers jabbed his stomach. Next, Moosie bucked him off and plowed crashing into the woods, and I haven't seen him since and who wants to?

"Berwyn!" Jo rushed up and tenderly helped him to his feet. "Berwyn, are you hurt?"

"Jo! Darling!"

They were in each other's arms. "Hey," I yelled, "throw me my swim trunks!"

Berwyn kissed her the fourth and fifth times. "Jo dearest, I was so afraid he might kill you. Oh, Jo!" and so on.

She closed one eye at me over his shoulder. So I knew it had been Moosie. Berwyn, of course, must never know.

"For goodness' sake," I begged, my teeth chattering, "you two have got years for that stuff. Toss me some clothes! Anyhow," I said, "what about the How to Choose Your Wife and Husband quizzes? D'you find you both score passing after all?"

"Berwyn," Jo announced, "scores a hundred with me. I don't need a psychiatrist when I see a man risk his life for his woman." She stopped. "Besides, that silly quiz doesn't even mention the most important thing, which certainly is love. Isn't it, darling?"

◆ Berwyn leaned back, his mouth open. "L-love? For gosh—! Say, it doesn't, does it? Jo, my Jo, you're marvelous!"

"I'm freezing to death," I pleaded with them.

"Berwyn," she said, "will you insist on our living here in the woods?"

"If— Do you prefer it, dear?" he said with foreboding.

"Heavens, no. I loathe 'em. Let's live in a big, big city."

Berwyn kissed her the eleventh time. "You bet we'll live in a big, big city. Excuse me, darling," he said, and unclasped her. "We're heading for matrimony just as soon as I throw Ernie his pants." ◆ ◆

BLOOD ON THE SNOW

Continued from page 20

dark-haired girl of twenty-four. Shock and pain and exposure had marked her sweet face. She said that her name was Lois Marin. As she spoke, tears welled from her eyes: "We'd be dead but for Mr. Cantu. He pulled me out of the wreckage, and Mr. Alcock too. Mr. Cantu carried me up here, and went back and found blankets and some food in the galley. Mr. Cantu has been so good to us!"

"Oh, well, I wasn't hurt much," Nick Cantu said diffidently.

"We'll take you people on up to a shelter cabin," Mary assured them. "You'll be warm and well fed until a rescue party comes to take you out."

John asked, "You're sure there are no other survivors?"

"Man, you should see the way that plane busted itself to pieces, caroming down the side of the canyon," Cantu told him. "I guess parts of it are scattered for two-three miles. Passengers, too," he added grimly. "I never found 'em all. I bet some of 'em never *are* found in that rocky jungle down there."

"You say one person went to get help?"

"That's right. A Miss Agnew. She said she used to ski up here and knew the country."

"Was she in good shape? Fit to travel, I mean?"

"Oh, yes," the stewardess said. "She was bruised and shaken up some, of course, but she wasn't injured, she was all right."

"In that case," John said, keeping his words casual and indifferent, "since she knew the country, she probably made it to one of our shelter cabins. Look, Mary. These people are likely starved. Let them have our lunch. You stay here, and Gunnar and I will go back to the Meadows and take samplings on the snow course. When we finish that, we'll all go on to the next shelter cabin."

"We'll hurry," Gunnar promised.

They started off. Mary got busy opening the haversack of food Gunnar had been carrying.

"I've got coffee, and I suspect hot coffee would sure hit the spot with

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you people.” She smiled at Cantu and Alcock.

“Before we eat,” Miss Marin said breathlessly, “would you help me rebandage my leg? The splint isn’t snug.”

“Of course,” Mary said, and looked at Nick Cantu. “Just to give us a little privacy, would you men go hunt some firewood?”

Cantu said sure, but Alcock followed him with ill grace.

◆ “Listen. My bandage is all right,” the stewardess whispered to Mary then. “I wanted to talk to you without being overheard. I’m worried sick—I’m worried about Miss Agnew. You didn’t meet her?”

“No. When she left you,” Mary asked, keeping her voice steady with an effort, “was she all right?”

“Oh, yes! Bruised some, but otherwise she was just fine, except that she was scared. She was terribly scared!”

“Of what?”

“She sneaked away from here at night, when the others were asleep. She kissed me, and told me not to worry because she’d send help—”

“Why did she *sneak* away? What was she afraid of?”

“I don’t want to say. I just don’t want to know anything!” The stewardess’s voice had an edge of hysteria. “I’ll let Miss Agnew do what’s necessary.”

“Maybe,” Mary said thoughtfully, “you’d better tell me whatever there is to tell. We did find Miss Agnew, and—she’s in very bad condition from shock and exposure.”

Mary couldn’t tell a glib lie, and Miss Marin had the sharp ear of a nurse who has heard a lot of false optimism told to patients. She grasped Mary’s hand convulsively.

“Miss Agnew’s dead, isn’t she? *Isn’t she?*”

Mary nodded.

“That poor kid. Damn them, damn them!”

“Who?”

The stewardess put her face in her hands and did not answer.

“When Miss Agnew left here, did anybody follow her?”

The stewardess nodded.

“I guess I’ve *got* to tell you, now. And stick my own silly neck out!”

“Who’re you so afraid of?”

“Nick Cantu! You’ll be afraid, too, when I tell you! Listen. Cantu is a partner in that huge Cantu Construction Company. His brother is the big-shot politician, Thomas Haye Cantu. You know, the one who’s chairman of the Senate Investigation Committee that’s studying army overseas courts-martial. Well, another passenger on our plane was a Mr. Malcolm Jarrold—” She stopped in sudden fright. Outside the lean-to heavy footsteps crunched in deep snow. “Tell you later!” she whispered to Mary.

Wood was flung down beside the fire.

And Nick Cantu demanded with mock querulousness that was only half pretended, “When do we eat?”

Mary divided the lunch of spam, cheese, and jelly sandwiches among the three of them. Lois Marin stared at her share.

“I’m afraid to start eating. What food we had gave out five days ago. I’ll make a p-pig of myself.”

Nick Cantu and Mr. Alcock wolfed the food. The stewardess worked one sandwich down, and became violently sick. Mary urged her to just drink coffee now and eat later.

LIBERTY

“Peeping Toms like you are a disgrace to the community!”

Cantu and Mr. Alcock stolidly munched away. Mary watched them. They were gray and haggard, yes. But somehow they did not look like men who had not eaten in five days. Suspicion grew.

◆ By late afternoon John and Gunnar had finished their survey of the Meadows snow course. They returned to the camp. With a section of duralumin skin off the wrecked plane, they made a crude toboggan. The stewardess and the two men passengers rode on it while John and Gunnar hauled.

The next shelter cabin was at Cloud’s Rest, which was the highest of the power company’s snow courses. As the group climbed uptrail, they came into a region of deep dry snow. Pulling the makeshift toboggan was hard work. During a stop for rest, big Nick Cantu stood up to stretch his legs—and sank hip-deep.

It was almost dark when they neared the cabin site at the base of the ridge on Cloud’s Rest. Here the drifts were huge. There was no log house to be seen.

John spotted the shovel wired into the top of a tamarack that now was barely above the snow level. Near by, a pole jutted from the crawling snow. With the shovel John dug down along the pole, while the others watched and shivered in the bitter wind. John dug down until he reached the wooden trap door of a “Santa Claus chimney.” He opened it. Then carefully he and Gunnar carried the stewardess down the ladder into the attic and down into the cabin itself, twenty feet under the surface of the drift. Gunnar lit a lamp, started a fire in the stove. And John opened the frost pit and took out food while the others climbed down to join them.

There were four bunks here, and blankets and sleeping bags. Mary made Lois Marin comfortable in a lower bunk; and while Mary was bent over her, the stewardess slipped a bit of folded paper into her hand. Mary smiled reassuringly, but Miss Marin did not smile back.

◆ They all ate a warm supper then. And afterward Cantu sprawled his heavy frame in a lower bunk with luxurious groans of contentment, and wizened Sam Alcock took the place above him.

“Mary, you sleep here,” Gunnar said, and put a sleeping bag in the bunk above the stewardess’s.

Mary looked at him for an intent moment, and said, “Thanks, but you take it, Gunnar. I’ve got a headache that’s going to keep me up most of the night. Too much snow glare. I’ll just sit by the stove.”

“Lie down. I’ll give you a couple aspirin.”

“I can’t take aspirin. I’m allergic to it. Please, Gunnar.”

Mary looked at John, and her glance for him was meaningful. His pulse hammered with excitement. Mary had reason for what she was doing. Because Mary had never had a headache from sun glare in her life; she was *not* allergic to aspirin; and she was never stubborn about a trifling whim. She needed help.

John swung the big chair toward the cookstove.

“Sit here, Mary. I’ll get you a pillow and a blanket.”

She obeyed. Gunnar’s bronzed face turned red and he glared at

John; then, tight-lipped, he climbed into the bunk himself.

Mary had found some old newspapers and started working on a crossword puzzle. The cabin grew quiet, except for the breathing of the sleepers.

"John," Mary asked, low-voiced, "what's a five-letter word for a sailing vessel?"

"Ketch," he said, and pushed a chair beside hers and sat down and studied the puzzle. She wrote on it: "Lean close to me. I've got to whisper to you. Be careful."

It seemed so very natural to pull her to relax against him, her face against his shoulder. His arm tightened with a convulsive hunger.

Her lips were close to his ear; and, very softly, she whispered, "John, I'm scared. I'm not having hysterics, but I'm scared to death." He pressed her shoulders reassuringly. "John, the stewardess insists that when Miss Agnew left their camp, she was not hurt. Bruised and shaken up, yes. But *not hurt.* Yet we found her beaten to death!"

"Don't brood about it, Mary."

"John, the stewardess says that Miss Agnew sneaked out of camp at night. Because she was afraid of someone here. And she says that somebody left camp right after Miss Agnew did. To follow her! And he caught her, and—and left her to die in the snow. But she didn't die. She crawled on to the shelter cabin, and she phoned f-for help. But it didn't come, and she d-died."

"Cantu, I'd say," John whispered. "Alcock looks too rabbity."

With shaking fingers Mary unfolded a bit of paper.

"The stewardess slipped this note to me. Read it!"

◆

John frowned, deciphering with difficulty words that had been written in furtive haste: "They told you that they didn't have a gun. But they have! So be careful. Maybe I won't get a chance to talk to you. Miss Agnew told me that Cantu killed Mr. Jarrold. She knew that, and that's why they had to kill her. When she sneaked out of camp, one of them followed her. I don't know which one. I was afraid to look. If we get a chance to talk, I'll tell you the rest."

John looked at Mary.

"Who was Mr. Jarrold? One of the plane passengers?"

As Mary nodded, there was a movement behind them, in one of the bunks. Mary stiffened in terror, and John whirled.

It was the stewardess, Lois Marin. She put a cautioning finger to her lips. Very slowly, so as not to make a sound that would disturb the other sleepers, she sat up and she beckoned.

Mary and John moved over beside her.

"I've got to tell you what I know," she whispered. She was breathless and shaking. She glanced across the room and said, "They mustn't hear me! Listen. Miss Agnew told me that when she came to her senses after the plane crash, she was pinned down under wreckage. She heard somebody moaning close by. It was the man who'd been sitting next to her—Mr. Jarrold. He told her that he couldn't move, either. That he had no feeling in his legs and thought his back was broken.

"They heard voices. Miss Agnew saw Nick Cantu and Mr. Alcock coming down the slope. She told Jarrold, 'They'll get us out,' but he said, 'You, maybe; but not me.' And he went on to tell her that he was an accountant and he'd worked for the Cantu outfit for ten years. He told her that he had discovered that the Cantu brothers had been making big black-market profits.

◆

"The Cantu brothers were black-marketing machine tools. And toward the end of the war they were selling hard-to-get building materials like soil pipe and hardwood flooring and plumbing fixtures. Jarrold dug up figures that showed that Nick Cantu and his brother, the senator, had made a million and a half dollars in black-market profits that they kept out of their income-tax reports so's not to expose their operations.

"Then Mr. Jarrold went to Nick Cantu and asked for money. Cantu lost his head and kicked Jarrold out. But Mr. Jarrold had made photostatic copies of the figures he had uncovered. He telephoned Cantu that he was flying to Washington with the photostats.

"Cantu was panicked. After all, Cantu's brother was a big-shot senator and all. Nick Cantu pulled wires and got plane reservations. He boarded our ship just before we took off. And he talked to Jarrold. Offered to pay him seventy thousand dollars.

"But Jarrold asked for a lot more. He knew that Cantu had to agree to anything. And Cantu did agree. To pay plenty more.

"But, lying under the wreckage, Jarrold knew he never would collect. He asked Miss Agnew to expose the Cantus.

"Then Cantu and his stooge found Jarrold and Miss Agnew. They pulled Miss Agnew out. She was still limp and half frozen. They wrapped her coat around her and carried her up the slope to a level

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spot. Then they returned to Jarrold. But they couldn't get him out of the wreckage. That's what *they* told us, later. Jarrold was wedged down so tight that he couldn't be moved. Besides, they said, he was already dying.

"But Miss Agnew told me that she saw Nick Cantu bend down over Jarrold and—"

◆

The shot was a deafening, dazing concussion in the small cabin. Lois Marin crumpled back upon the bunk, and Mary screamed. John whirled. He saw burly Nick Cantu sitting up in his bunk, and smoke was lifting from the muzzle of the pistol in his hand.

"Don't move, any of you," he said heavily.

"John," Mary gasped, "she's dead—"

In spite of Cantu's warning, John turned and bent over the stewardess. But Lois Marin was already beyond aid.

Gunnar Larssen had jerked upright in his bunk. He looked confusedly at them all, and at the gun in Cantu's hand. And Sam Alcock, his neurotic face white and twitching, was climbing down from the upper bunk behind Cantu.

"I don't want any more trouble," Cantu said. "But," he added, his small red-brown eyes hard and reckless, "try crossing me, though, and I'll stop you, quick."

John took no reassurance from his words. John, now, saw what must happen—for he understood what *had* happened. And when Mary looked up at him, her lips trembling, he realized that she understood too. He put his arm around her shoulders protectingly.

Instead of rescuing Mr. Jarrold when he lay under the wreckage, Cantu had deliberately struck him with the butt of his gun, or with a rock, and left him to die. It was so simple and easy a way to get rid of Jarrold! When search parties would finally come in and find them all, it would look as if Jarrold had died as the other victims had died. . . . But then, as the survivors waited for rescue, Miss Agnew became a worry to Cantu. He felt more and more certain that Miss Agnew knew something. Maybe Jarrold had talked to her while they lay pinned under the wreckage. Maybe she had been able to see what happened when Cantu and Sam Alcock had returned to Jarrold.

When she tried so desperately to sneak away from camp in the night, Cantu was convinced. He had followed, and—taken care of her.

And now, John realized, he's got to take care of us.

He can't leave a single witness to testify against him.

◆

Nick Cantu gave orders. There was a good toboggan in the cabin attic; each shelter cabin had one for emergencies. John and Gunnar hauled the toboggan outside. The body of the stewardess they carried out, too, and put on the toboggan; and Sam Alcock, on Cantu's command, dumped the body into a deep gully near by, where it would likely never be found. And even if it were, weather and coyotes would have made it unrecognizable.

Then Cantu announced that he and Sam Alcock would ride, while John and Gunnar, on skis, would pull them out to the highway. Mary would follow along on skis.

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LIBERTY

"I'll be watching close," Cantu warned, "so be careful."

At dawn they paused for a brief rest before they started the long haul over Granite Ridge.

By noon they had reached Burro Flats, and stopped to rest in a stand of tall lodgepoles.

Nick Cantu stood up on the toboggan, groaning as he unkinked his cramped legs. He stepped off the toboggan, to walk a few paces and get the blood flowing; but his foot sank deep in the soft snow. He swore and grabbed for Sam Alcock's shoulder with his free hand.

Gunnar stood close, and he had been watching warily. Now he moved. Swiftly he swung his ski pole, and knocked the pistol from Cantu's right hand, knocked the weapon whirling into the snow. Instantly Cantu lunged to snatch up the weapon; but Gunnar drove himself forward, and with his shoulder knocked the burly older man sprawling onto the drift. And Gunnar whirled to grab the pistol.

But the gun had fallen behind the toboggan, and wiry little Sam Alcock was closest to it. He flung himself onto the snow and seized the pistol and jerked it up.

"Get back," Alcock commanded.

Cantu straightened up and stumped back to the toboggan and stepped up onto it. His face was black with rage. Reaching down, he took the gun from Alcock.

"Come here, Larssen."

Gunnar moved toward Cantu.

"Now take off your skis. Quick!"

Gunnar hesitated, blood draining from his weathered face. Then he bent, unlatched his skis, and stepped off of them. And as he straightened up, Nick Cantu struck swiftly, hitting Gunnar alongside the temple with the barrel of his pistol. Gunnar crumpled senseless to the snow. Mary cried out.

And John blurted, "You didn't have to crack his skull!"

Cantu looked at Mary, and ordered, "Get off your skis, too."

"You can't do it, Cantu!" John burst out hoarsely. "This snow averages eight or nine feet, and it's soft, with no crust. You can't leave anybody here without skis. They'd be helpless!"

"The two of them can hole up under a fir tree," Cantu retorted. "Soon's we get out to the highway, I'll phone the power company to send people in here to get them."

"If they stay, I stay too," John said.

"No. You're hauling us out to the road," Cantu said sharply. "Gather up those two pair of skis. Hurry!"

"John," Mary urged, "here are my skis."

White of face, John picked them up. Mary showed no fear; yet he knew that she understood what was in store for her and Gunnar. It took cruel, punishing effort to flounder hip-deep, waist-deep through the drifts. Maybe they could go a mile or two before they wore out, before their strength was gone, before their hearts broke.

Mary said, her lips trembling, "John, be careful."

His vision blurred. Mary wasn't giving thought to herself; her concern was for him.

◆

Hauling his two passengers downtrail wasn't difficult for John. They quickly covered the mile and a half to Big Rock Canyon.

Soon. You've got to do it soon. The thought beat in his brain with sickening urgency. Gunnar and Mary could not travel far, and could not last long. *So whatever you do for them, it's got to be in a hurry.*

John had no illusions as to Cantu's plans for him. Cantu and Sam Alcock, being amateurs, were clumsy and awkward on skis. They needed his help until they neared the highway. Then they would leave him in some deep gully under a pile of rocks. And when they reached a town, they would tell a story of being the only survivors of the plane crash, and of having floundered through the snow until they reached a shelter cabin where they found skis and a sled. . . .

Big Rock Canyon was not one of the deepest of the many gorges of the watershed, but its steep glistening walls rose fifteen hundred feet to rimrock topped with leaning cornices of snow that flamed with sunfire. And on the long slopes below, the dazzling white was mottled with rosy patches of red snow. John noticed the red snow and his lean young face tightened.

Carefully he figured his problem. Here the trail did not slant along the upper wall of the canyon, but followed the foot of the slope. If he plunged off-trail, dragging the toboggan with him, he'd accomplish nothing: they'd slide a hundred feet into the snow-choked stream bed below. Cantu and Alcock would likely not even be hurt.

But I can't wait! Gunnar and Mary won't make it any farther than this. I've got to leave at least one pair of skis here where they'll be able to find 'em!

He stared up at the slopes of red snow, at the towering cornices, and his lips tightened agonizedly.

Cantu will shoot, he told himself. *He'll risk it. He has to risk it, or he's licked. So—*

◆

They started down the ledge trail skirting the foot of the south wall. The slopes were wooded; as they slid down the trail, the toboggan gained on John.

Deliberately he let it run over the back of his left ski and trip him, causing him to plunge into the snow and causing the toboggan to head into the wall and spill its two yelling passengers. John took the fall carefully, to save his ankles.

"You all right? You all right?" Cantu shouted at him.

Cantu and Alcock had lunged to their feet and were floundering awkwardly through the snow toward him.

"Yeah, I'm fine," he said. "Just tangled up."

He slipped the toboggan rope off his shoulder, and awkwardly got to his feet and straightened out his skis. Cantu and Sam Alcock leveled the toboggan, and bent to pick up the skis they had dropped in the spill.

Then John acted. With his ski poles, he shoved off into a wild start downtrail, crouching forward, projectiling himself down the steep ledge with all his strength and skill.

"Stop! Damn you, stop!" Cantu bellowed.

The glove made his hand awkward for a precious moment as he snatched his pistol from inside his coat. Then he shot, the roar of the .38 harsh and heavy in the steely cold. John slued sideways from the jolt of a bullet that slashed along his ribs, but caught himself and kept going, with every instant gaining speed and distance. Cantu, floundering angrily through the snow, fired again, the explosion kicking up thudding echoes between the steep walls, and missed. He fired a third time.

◆

John felt a heavy blow in the back, high on the left side. He was crouched, lunging forward with the impetus of another desperate shove on his ski poles, swooping swiftly downtrail. The slope at his right, the white snow underfoot, the trough of space at his left, flowed past in a dizzying, blinding blur. He was off balance, he was tilting sideways, vertigo swinging in his brain, and his left ski was twisting away and would catch an edge and fling him head over heels. Somehow he straightened the ski, but he could not recover balance; he was tipping over as he sped downtrail, he was falling, he was going to sprawl onto his face. *Keep going! You've got to! You've got to save your skis! Just a little farther. Stretch it! Stretch it out! Keep going—*

He tried, he tried desperately, but the trail was bending up, tipping up before him like a wall that canted sidewise. And then he struck, then he crumpled and slid in a grotesque heap over the snow.

"You hit 'im!" Alcock yelled excitedly. "You downed 'im!"

"Lucky shot, at that distance," Nick Cantu grunted, breathing hard. "He damn near got away."

High up on the opposite slopes, a lofty cornice of snow jarred free with the reverberations of the shots. That leaning forefront of snow fell, hit the drifts below. Cantu caught the movement from the corner of his eye and jerked his head around. Sam Alcock turned, alarmed. Together they peered up at the far wall.

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BLOOD ON THE SNOW Continued from page 75

At first, in distance, the slide seemed to be moving slowly; but as it rushed downward, widening, adding mass and building momentum, perceptibly it grew in size and velocity; and its low rumble deepened into growling thunder.

"Good God!" Alcock gasped. "We got to run!"

"Take it easy. It's on the opposite side of the canyon. We're O.K. here," Cantu assured him.

On came the slide. It was of the fine dry snow that starts easiest and falls fastest. In its first downrush, its motion was plain—the center racing ahead, rolling surflike, and the sides retarded by friction. But the rising cloud of icy dust, like the boiling debris upblown in an explosion, began to mask the face of the avalanche. And as it plunged nearer, the roar of its passage became earth-shaking and thunderous.

"Lord!" Alcock breathed.

"You're all right," Nick Cantu snapped at him.

Down, down came the slide. It had set up "avalanche blast" by the frontal thrust of the great mass of snow and the suction of its three-mile-a-minute speed. On each side of its track trees were denuded of snow, were bent over, cracked, uprooted, and boulders were torn from the mountain wall—the shadow of wreckage that marked the passage of winds of destruction. Cantu and Alcock stood rooted, staring.

◆

Then the avalanche hit the canyon bottom with a booming, cannonading impact that jarred the mountainside. The crest of the snow came on, crossing the narrow floor and zooming up the opposite wall, coming uphill like the dash of giant surf against a breakwater. It couldn't come far, not as far as the ledge trail. But its blast came on like the concussion from a battleship broadside.

It hit burly Nick Cantu and Sam Alcock and bowled them over, struck them down. It broke off trees and tore boulders loose and battered the slope of snow with force that set off a fresh avalanche higher on this side of the canyon. Down this south slope now came the secondary slide. Alcock did not see it; Alcock was lying senseless. But Nick Cantu saw it. Futilely he tried to escape. He lurched to his knees, he got to his feet in a plunging run. But he sank to his hips in the yielding snow. He floundered but three gasping paces before the new slide swept down over the ledge trail, burying men and skis and toboggan, driving all before it, and crashing on down into the canyon bottom. Fine white dust erupted hundreds of feet into the air, obliterating all view.

It was ten minutes before it cleared enough so that John, lying where he'd fallen, downtrail, was able to see up the gorge. There was no sign of Nick Cantu or Alcock. There would be no sign, he knew. There would be no sign until spring. Now there was only the pure white surface of snow that masked with its blank charity the rash hope and violence and desperation sprawled unmoving in its frigid depths.

◆

John got to his feet and swayed in an agony of pain and weakness. He clenched his teeth and fought back the giddiness until the trail was steady under his skis again. He could feel the warm seep of blood down his back; and when he tried to grasp a ski pole with his left hand, the effort exploded darts of anguish in his shoulder. Using just one ski pole, he moved slowly uptrail, his legs shaking and sweat beading clammily upon his body.

He looked for the toboggan, for the other skis which Nick Cantu had taken from Mary and Gunnar, but found nothing.

"I've got to get back to them with my own pair."

He gingerly crossed the tail of the slide, and moved on up the gorge. A mile and a half to go. Uptrail. He'd never make it, he told himself. But he had to try. He had to try. . . .

He'd gone well over a mile when he saw Mary and Gunnar floundering through the snow toward him. Then his will snapped; his knees buckled and he slumped into the snow.

They carried him into the little cavelike space under the sloping branches of a snow-laden fir. And in this shelter, out of the wind, John presently revived. Mary improvised a rough pad from a handkerchief and scarf to put over his wound.

"What happened, man?" Gunnar demanded. "Where's Cantu?"

"Snow slide got him and Alcock."

"How come it got them but not you?"

"I was running away, and I'd covered a pretty good distance before Cantu started shooting and finally hit me."

"Running away!" Mary's voice was faint with shock. "You deliberately *goaded* Cantu into shooting."

"That's what caused the slide."

John looked at Gunnar.

"It was my responsibility. You see that, don't you?"

Gunnar's mouth tightened. He glanced briefly at Mary, and he nodded, just nodded.

John said, "Take my skis, Gunnar."

"Yeah. I can reach the Moraine shelter cabin in two hours, if I try hard, and I'll come back with an extra pair of skis and a toboggan. Before midnight we'll be sleeping in bunks."

"And Gunnar," Mary said, "phone my dad to come meet us in the tractor—with a doctor."

Gunnar nodded. He clamped on the skis, waved, and was gone.

John's face was hot, but he shook with cold.

"I'm feverish and shivering. My wound, I guess."

Mary moved close and put her arms around him.

◆

At the Moraine cabin, Mary took the first-aid kit from its locker and dressed John's wound. A surgeon would have to cut out the bullet, but meanwhile she gave him sulfa and barbital.

Gunnar mused, "Nick Cantu must've guessed that Miss Agnew confided in the stewardess."

"Maybe he even overheard them," John added, "so he realized he had to deal with them both. Remember, the stewardess said she hadn't eaten in five days? Yet Cantu had got lunchboxes from the plane commissary. After the first day he told Miss Agnew and the stewardess that there was no more food left because he planned they should both be dead of their hurts, or from starvation and exposure, before rescue came. Bear in mind that he didn't *shoot* Miss Agnew that night he followed her from camp. He wanted to leave no indications of murder in case her body was ever actually found and identified.

"Another thing. Falling snow had pretty well covered the wreckage. Why didn't Cantu *uncover* it, so it could be spotted if a search plane passed overhead? Because he didn't want rescue until he was ready! Until the only survivors were Alcock and himself.

"That's why he was so panicked when he saw us coming up-canyon the other morning. The stewardess was still alive. So he took a wild shot at us, to scare us off, or to get us buried under a snowslide. It didn't work.

"And from there on, he had to take increasing chances, improvise new plans."

"And they *would* have worked," Mary said soberly, "but for you, John."

The barbital took effect presently; John dozed off.

◆

After breakfast, next morning, Gunnar prepared to leave.

"I'll go take samplings of the Moraine snow course, and that will finish our survey. I'll be back by noon, and we'll leave here in time to meet the tractor below Moraine Canyon."

Mary stepped through the door with him.

"Gunnar, I want to talk to you a minute."

"You don't have to tell me something that's plain to see," he cut in, his voice low and taut. "When two people have really had a marriage, they've built something too deep and solid to be lost in a mere court decree."

"That's it, Gunnar."

"You love John, and you can't marry me," he said, "because you and John have never been divorced. Not really."

"That's what we've discovered, Gunnar."

He bent and fastened on his skis. Straightening, he smiled.

"Well, so long. I won't wish you the best, Mary. You've already got it." ◆◆

HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON?

Continued from page 22

guish and paced around his desk nervously. He was in pain and coughed in a frenzy. He was also angry. The present turn of events was far from pleasing to him. His sense of justice was outraged. Another worm was about to turn. Life was not just beer and skittles and common sense and happy endings all in a row. He had never really admired Job, and had no intention of imitating him.

He pressed a button, and in a moment the executive editor came in.

"Hello, Jenkins."

"Yes, sir."

"See that everyone is here at five o'clock. On this floor. Get rid of all callers and send for anyone that's out. I'm going to serve tea. And, say, call up all our writers in the city and ask them to come over."

Mr. Jenkins tripped over his own feet getting out. He was too astonished to speak.

Mr. Hoskins pressed another button, and in came the director of the Art Department.

"Hello, Gates," he greeted him. "I'm having a little tea here this afternoon. Suppose you call up all

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our artists who have studios in the city and invite them to join us at five."

Mr. Gates gasped and departed in haste.

Mr. Hoskins pressed another button, and in came the head of the Advertising Department.

"Hello, Preston. I'm giving a little party at five here this afternoon. Call up our best friends among our advertisers and invite them over."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Hoskins had a staff that was trained not to reason why. He pressed another button, and in came the head of the Household Culinary Department.

"Hello, Miss Waring," he said. "I want to give a little tea party here this afternoon. Call up the best caterer in town and tell him to send over the necessary stuff for two hundred and fifty people. We want an elaborate buffet of cold meats, salads, sandwiches, and whatever else you think necessary. Have a row of desks moved together and see that it is kept supplied as long as anyone wants to eat. Your department can look after the serving, can't it?"

"Yes, sir," said Miss Waring and hastened after the others.

◆ Next he signaled for Miss Fagin She came in with a notebook and a look of reproach.

"No dictation, Miss Fagin," he told her. "I want you to get in touch with Mr. K. C. Clarke for me. He'll be at his office or the club. Tell him I want to give a little party over here at five o'clock. Tell him that I am not familiar with the procedure, but I would like the proper refreshments and would appreciate it if he would arrange the matter. Tell him I will need about four bartenders and enough stuff for two hundred and fifty people."

Miss Fagin dropped her notebook and allowed her mouth to open slowly and uncomprehendingly.

"Do you understand, Miss Fagin? Four bartenders at five o'clock."

"Yes, sir. Four bartenders at five o'clock to supply two hundred and fifty people."

She retrieved her notebook and snatched the card. Certainly something had happened to her employer that boded no good. What if his readers should ever hear of this? She recalled a certain fiery editorial he had dictated to her, but she was too well trained to question his order, and hastened to her telephone.

Mr. Hoskins sat down and sighed again. He coughed painfully and reached in his desk drawer for a lozenge — duly approved by his Home Remedy Department.

For the next two hours he was busy going through his desk and coughing intermittently. Some papers went into the wastebasket and some went into his briefcase. By five he had disposed of everything and was now ready to abandon his castle, the domain of the lord of the National Home Magazine for fifteen years. During that time he had been the National Home Magazine. By day he guided the various departments along the course he had charted, toward the goal he had visioned; by night he read and revised the manuscripts that would later make up his pages. For fifteen years he had given it every hour of his time, every ounce of his energy. His only friends were his readers, his only reward their endorsement. He was unknown at the Algonquin; he had never been on Broadway; now he was alone in the world.

His worldly goods stowed in his briefcase, he walked into the outer office, which now resembled a college club on the day of the big game. On one side of the huge room was a buffet, and on the other was a bar, behind which four bartenders opened bottles and mixed punch. In between milled his amazed staff and the equally amazed visitors who were now arriving. All looked at him expectantly and refused to believe their eyes. He coughed nervously and took another lozenge, then joined the crowd and was presented to the guests by the various heads of departments.

Everyone was plainly waiting for an explanation of this phenomenon so he rapped for silence and mounted a desk. He didn't have to ra again. Everyone was breathless.

"My friends and associates," h began, and slipped another lozeng into his mouth to check his cough "you are probably startled at thi impromptu entertainment, and wel you may be. So am I. Let me explain. This is a farewell protest Today I sold the National Hom Magazine to Mr. Cohn, who ha been trying to get it for over year." There was a gasp fron everyone and a loud murmur whic subsided as he went on. "I have always rejected his offers, as I coul not bring myself to disband this organization under any circumstances. But this morning I had conference with my doctors. The tell me that I must leave New Yor and go to Arizona at once. They tel me further that I will not be coming back this way, so I have don the only thing possible under th circumstances. I am sure you wil all fare well under the new management, and I have been assure that there will be no changes mad in the personnel. I hope you will al enjoy my last hours among you."

◆ He stepped down amid perfec silence. Then there was a roar a everyone tried to talk at once. H waved them back.

"Please, no sympathy! This is no a wake. It's a party, even though farewell one. Let us eat, drink, an be merry, for tomorrow—I go t Arizona!"

He led the way to the improvise bar, and everyone crowded aroun him there.

As a farewell gesture he coul not have done better. As a protes against the decrees of Fate it wa well timed. Everyone entered int the spirit of the thing. Writers came saw, and rushed to the telephone t call up others. Some artists brough their models with them, others telephoned for them.

In half an hour the main office o the National Home resembled Georgia camp meeting.

In an hour the weaker ones began to thin out and the die-hard took possession of the bar. Th head of the Home Music Department was ordered to send for a orchestra at once, and desks wer moved to make room for dancin

Mr. Hoskins was kept busy bidding his former staff farewell. On pretty little stenographer, havin just been introduced to Bacard threw her arms around his neck an gave him a farewell kiss that i

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"Don't you dare say you're tired."

LIBERTY

"What do you mean—the refrigerator is empty? There's $27 worth of meat, fruit and vegetables in there!"

other circumstances might have been construed more as a beginning than as an ending. Just to look at the girl, he wouldn't have thought she had it in her.

After this transaction was completed a line formed. That was all right in its way, but Mr. Hoskins soon found that he could do better in his private office, and he retired thereto from time to time with the more bereaved of his deserted myrmidons. Half the world never knows how the other half lives. Mr. Hoskins had never known how the other half of his staff lived, but now he began to suspect. When he noticed that several of the more impressionable were repeating, he was glad that he had retired and would not be obliged to take disciplinary action. How long, he wondered, had this sort of thing been going on?

◆

By seven only the heartiest had survived. The writers and artists were intact, being accustomed to free likker in large quantities, but his amateur staff was sadly depleted. None of them was in training.

The orchestra was in full blast; a double quartet was holding forth in a far corner; five models had become a chorus to show up the Tiller Girls; and four boys from the Advertising Department were chasing a little secretary who had a zipper down the front of her dress. It developed that this same zipper had been annoying them for days.

Mr. Hoskins had been too busy speeding his parting guests to join in the revelry, but by eight he had disposed of everyone who intended to leave. About fifty remained, oiling up the machinery for the cool of the evening and waiting for the whistle. This was the zero hour, and the host had met the challenge without compromise. Mr. Hoskins summoned the head of the Home Entertainment Department and ordered a charade. Next they had living pictures, and then everyone became a trained seal.

Mr. Hoskins knew that something was missing, but it was not until nine o'clock that he found out what it was. It was Miss Fagin. Where was she? It had been hours since he had seen her. Surely she had not gone home. Not once since she had become his secretary had she ever left the office before he had. Well, there was really no reason for her to stay tonight. During these four years he had scarcely been aware that she had a corporeal existence in space or time. In four years he had addressed her personally but once. That was when a Broadway producer had called on him in regard to staging a serial that he was running. Miss Fagin had ushered the great man into the private office, and his glance had lingered.

"Well, well, what a natural!" he said, ignoring Mr. Hoskins for the moment. "How'd you like a spot in my new show?"

"I've never been on the stage," she told him, blushing.

"I know that," he agreed, "but you ought to be there now. Put on your hat and coat and come with me. I'll start you at fifty a week, and when you learn to sing I'll make it a hundred. There's gold in that hair."

"Thank you, sir," she told him, "but I really couldn't give up my work here."

"Well, take it or leave it," he said. "You weren't born to blush unseen around this dump. When you get tired of this side show, come around, and I'll put you in the main tent."

Miss Fagin had fled. Later Mr. Hoskins had remarked to her, "You were very wise to reject such an offer. The stage is no place for a young woman today."

That had been two years before, and since then Miss Fagin had not received any save official notice. It was different now. He must find her. He had been mauled over by a lot of little bob-haired, short-skirted, flat-chested clock watchers. Now he wanted to see what a really efficient young woman could do about the matter. Miss Fagin had been capable in all things; she would not fail him now.

He sought the head of the Helpful Hints to the Lovelorn Department and asked if she had seen Miss Fagin. She hadn't. Well, there was one sure way to find her. He walked unsteadily to his office and pressed a button. In a second Miss Fagin appeared, notebook in hand. Her eyes were red and her cheeks were moist, which showed that she had been hiding away in her office with her grief. How long, Mr. Hoskins wondered, had this sort of thing been going on?

◆

He was deeply touched at this evidence of devotion and tried to comfort her. He would probably have succeeded had not his guests sought him out and insisted that he and Miss Fagin lead the cakewalk which was to be the next event.

There was more food and drink, and then the head of the Home Beauty Department and one of the country's leading novelists did an apache dance. Everything went well until their hands slipped during a twirl and the Beauty Department landed on the bass drum.

A prominent illustrator was the next on the program, and he did some sleight-of-hand tricks that all went wrong. He tried to make cards disappear, but they never would. He tried to swallow a lighted cigarette and had to have the fire extinguisher. Everyone cheered, and he was spurred on to heroic efforts. He called for a long piece of elastic which was to pull a watch up his sleeve. None was available. A little model said she had two pieces on the back of her brassière.

"Give it here quick," he demanded.

"I can't get it off in this dress," she protested.

Someone very obligingly snatched off her dress, and the brassière was delivered to the amateur magician.

The performance went on, and

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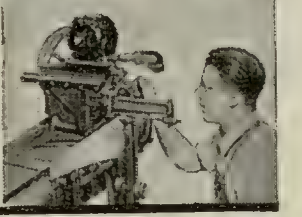

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HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON?

Continued from page 79

nobody seemed to notice that the model's dress had disappeared instead of the watch. No one paid the slightest attention to her but Mr. Hoskins, who was so shocked that he summoned the head of the Home Etiquette Department and asked for advice as to how to handle this delicate situation. How long, he wanted to know, had this sort of thing been going on?

The head of the Etiquette Department pondered the question carefully and then pondered the little girl even more carefully. He finally ruled that as a host could not criticize or reprimand an invited guest, his only recourse would be to refuse to extend another invitation.

"Can a host insist on adequate fresh air?" Mr. Hoskins asked.

"Certainly."

"Then have someone open a few windows over there behind her. And keep on opening them until she gets something on."

In a few minutes decorum was restored.

◆ Mr. Hoskins summoned the head of the Home Poetry Department and ordered her to prepare an ode to fittingly mark the passing of the year and the change of management. Now, Miss Sibley's principal duties for the past fifteen years had been the reading of proof on Edgar Guest's poems and an occasional chant in praise of prosperity, so there was no precedent for her action, but many puritanical spinsters have been known to utter terrible obscenities when coming out of ether, and many sincerely devout ministers have lost their tempers and shamed sailors with their blasphemies. Where these strange words come from at times like these is unknown to science, but Mr. Hoskins should not have asked Miss Sibley to write an ode after she had consumed four glasses of Bacardi.

Later there was a series of Greek dances, a high-kicking contest, and a famous writer of bedtime stories gave an imitation of Leon Errol's collapsing knees until he hit his head on the corner of a desk. Then there was a chariot race with desk chairs, and somebody tried to walk a tight rope.

Mr. Hoskins began to wish he had another magazine to sell and wondered why his Home Remedy Department had never discovered that bourbon was better for his throat than lozenges. Miss Fagin remained at his side, and no one else was allowed to kiss him good-by or hello.

No one knows why or when the party broke up. It drifted gradually from the main ballroom into the long line of executive offices, and from there into the memories of yesterday to take its place somewhere between the armistice celebration and the Illustrators' Show.

The next morning the janitors arrived totally unprepared for the scene which greeted their eyes. Apparently the last act had been Sherman's March to the Sea. Where there had once been a magazine office was now a pile of empty bottles, torn telephone books, broken glasses, sandwiches, hair nets, smashed derbies, French heels, cigarette butts, torn elastic, and part of a bass drum.

The janitors, in cleaning up the outer office, found numerous persons asleep in odd corners. The advertising manager of a big furniture company had crawled into one of his own Cross-Index Multiple-Title filing cases, and the smile on his face indicated that at last he had found a use for the thing. A noted writer of adventure and travel stories had found a globe map of the world and tried to use it for a pillow. He had some girl's leopard-skin coat for a blanket and was apparently preparing himself to write another smashing serial.

The private offices were reminiscent of a Russian refugee train, and when the janitors came to Mr. Hoskins' private office they found the biggest surprise of all, for there, under his own desk, sleeping peacefully, was Mr. Hoskins himself!

And next door, curled up under her desk, notebook in hand, they found Miss Fagin, faithful to the last!

◆ Two days later Mr. Hoskins was escorted to the station by the heads of the various departments and Miss Fagin. They all stood around awkwardly, waiting for the gate to open.

"Are you sure you won't need a secretary in Arizona, Mr. Hoskins?" Miss Fagin asked for the tenth time. "You know you will have a great deal of correspondence, and you'll need someone to answer the phone."

"I'm sorry, my dear," Mr. Hoskins told her, "but it is out of the question for you to accompany me. I shan't need anything very long." His handkerchief showed a trace of blood as he wiped his lips.

"But I could take care of you."

"No, you belong here. Mr. Cohn will need you with him."

"I sent in my resignation this morning."

"What are you going to do?"

"You remember that chance to go on the stage?"

He nodded.

"I called that producer up yesterday," Miss Fagin went on, "and told him I would like to reconsider my decision. He said he was going to make a big picture in Hollywood and offered me a part in it. I guess I'll take it now."

"Why not? I've heard that Hollywood is a fascinating place. I'm sorry I shall never see it. Good luck to you."

The gate was open now, and with a few last words Mr. Hoskins blessed them as Moses blessed the Hebrew children when he was snatched from the Promised Land. There was not a dry eye as Mr. Hoskins coughed his last cough on Manhattan and turned his back on his two million subscribers.

◆

His New York doctors had directed him to a local practitioner in Arizona, so Mr. Hoskins had him summoned. He arrived shortly and examined Mr. Hoskins carefully.

"Yes, you're right sick," the doctor told him. "But there's something sort of funny about you. You've got a high temperature, and you've got a right sore throat, and there's something wrong with your respiration, but you're fat and prosperous and got a good strong pulse. You don't seem to live up to what I expected, but I guess those New York doctors know their business, and they took plenty of X-rays. Well, if they say you're going to die, then I guess that's what you'll have to do, but you're going to be an awfully healthy corpse. I'll send you a nurse to look after you a few days and see what happens. How long since you've been to a dentist?"

"Two months," Mr. Hoskins said.

"Well, I'm going to send one over to see you. Your gums look bad."

The doctor departed, and soon the nurse and dentist appeared.

The dentist examined him and chuckled.

"Yes," he said. "Dr. Jones was right. You've got Vincent's all right."

Mr. Hoskins gasped a query.

"It's what's commonly known as trench mouth or the hoof-and-mouth disease," the dentist explained. "You don't seem to be able to talk. Well, well, let's look at your throat. Been using a lot of different kinds of gargle, I expect. And none of them did you any good. All right, I'll tell the nurse what to do for you. Fix your gums in a couple of weeks."

In an hour Dr. Jones was back with some new ideas and a strange-tasting yellow gargle.

"I'm as dumb as these New York doctors," he told Mr. Hoskins. "I should have seen you had Vincent's in your throat. That's your trouble. I'll have you up in three days."

"But my lungs—"

"Well, I can't tell about them yet, but I'll put my money on it you've got Vincent's infection in them. I don't care what the X-ray says. Vincent's can fool the X-ray."

The next day Mr. Hoskins was able to talk without pain. "Is this thing contagious, doctor?" he asked.

"Sure," he was told. "All the college boys and girls get it from mugging each other."

"Good Lord! Then I could have given it to people when I left New York!"

"Did you kiss some girl good-by when you left?"

"About fifty."

The doctor eyed him with newfound respect.

"I wouldn't go back if I were you," he said, "whether they get it or not."

After the doctor left, Mr. Hoskins called the National Home Magazine and told the Home Hygiene Department to get the mote out of its own eye and to work fast. He also sent word to the writers, artists, and advertisers to consult with their girl friends and all take heed. He shuddered to think how far the thing might have gone.

He reached everyone but Miss Fagin. She had left town and could not be located. There was a rumor that she had gone to Hollywood. For two weeks he burnt up the wires, but she was still unaccounted for when the doctor made his final report.

"You've had a plain case of Vincent's infection," he explained. "It'll fool anybody. I know of one case that fooled four of as good doctors as I ever saw. In six weeks you'll be as sound as you ever were. But that's no reason to hurry back east. This is a pretty good place to live, and we need a good substantial man like you. Why don't you settle down here?"

"I can't, doctor," he explained. "I must hurry to Hollywood. It is just possible that I may have passed this on to an innocent party, and I must find her in time to stop it."

The doctor smiled.

"What about the other forty-nine in New York?" he asked.

Mr. Hoskins blushed.

"I'm no Mormon," he explained.

◆

Mr. Hoskins, completely cured of his plebeian ailment, arrived in Hollywood and made inquiries for Miss Fagin. She was nowhere to be found. No studio had her listed even

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HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON?

Continued from page 81

as an extra. He made a round of all the dentists, but none of them was treating any such young woman. For two weeks Mr. Hoskins carried on his search and wired New York intermittently. There was no trace of Miss Fagin.

One afternoon he ran into one of his old editors, George Bondell.

"Hello," said Mr. Bondell, "and what brings you out to this happy land of sunshine, orange juice, and gin?"

"Hello," Mr. Hoskins returned. "I'm just looking around. What are you doing here?"

"I'm head of the scenario department of Super Stupendous Features. Say, you're the very man I'm looking for. I need you badly. My chief editor has just been shot by his wife's chauffeur's wife's brother with his little boy's air rifle. He'll recover, and the shooting was accidental, but the public won't stand for any scandal, and I just found out that the brother was a bootlegger. You're a gift from heaven. The job is yours. What about it?"

"But I don't know anything about scenarios."

"You don't have to. You know hokum. Come along with me, and I'll show you our plant. We're making a super-extra-super feature right now. The boss wanted to make a flying picture, so he bought Ralph Connor's Sky Pilot. But the hero turned out to be a preacher instead of an aviator, so I had to rewrite it. Then he arrived out here six weeks ago with a new star who can't speak English. So I had the boys make the Grand March from Aïda into a theme song, and we're going to bomb the Pyramids. This new star, Mitzi Hunyadi, will burn up the celluloid. She's got It and If, both. We brought her straight from Hungary where she had all the local sheiks fighting duels until the Director of Public Safety ordered her banished. What it takes to come hither she's got."

◆ They took a taxi to the studio and Mr. Hoskins was conducted through the building. On one set a picture was being taken. During the rehearsal Mr. Hoskins and Mr. Bondell were admitted.

The set was an interior, and a British general was seated before a big log fireplace. His face showed abject terror and he gripped the arms of his chair in a frenzy.

On the floor was a tiger-skin rug, and on the tiger-skin rug was a beautiful girl clad in a couple of brass finger bowls and a drum major's sash.

"That's Mitzi!" Mr. Bondell whispered.

She was smiling coyly at the general, and the perspiration was dropping not only from him but from every man on the set. If the tiger had suddenly come back to life, nobody would have paid any attention to him.

The director stepped forward.

"No, no, Miss Hunyadi!" he protested. "Listen. You're the captured daughter of the native king. The general is going to shoot your father and brothers at sunrise. You don't speak English, and you've got to save your relatives. There's only one way to do it. You have sneaked into the general's quarters, and now you've got to get his mind off the war. You don't want to frighten him. You want to vamp him as no general has been vamped since Cleopatra took Antony canoe paddling on the Nile. You want to cajole him and draw him right out of his chair and onto the rug with you. You must be wistful but at the same time compelling."

"That's what I'm trying to be," said Miss Hunyadi, "and I've certainly had plenty of practice. I was wistful and compelling with one man for four years, and all he did was walk out on me. I must be descended from Medusa."

◆ Mr. Hoskins jumped and nearly swallowed his tongue. That voice! Where had he heard it before? He stared at Miss Hunyadi as she turned to go through the scene again. His heart skipped a beat, and he blinked his eyes. She might be Mitzi Hunyadi in Hollywood, but she had certainly been Miss Fagin in New York! How long, he wondered, had this sort of thing been going on?

He watched her go through the scene in a daze. No matter what the effect on the general, she could have had Mr. Hoskins on that rug in two seconds more. The general was finally calmed down and was able to register pleasure instead of terror. The male part of the audience was never able to register anything but acute agony.

After the scene had been taken twice, the company was dismissed. Miss Fagin bundled herself into a voluminous cloak and looked around the set. She saw Mr. Hoskins, and without waiting for her maid to put on her slippers, rushed over to him with a cry of welcome. She threw her arms around his neck and pressed the brass finger bowls to his bosom.

"Oh, I'm so glad to see you!" she said. "I thought you were dead by this time. What are you doing here?"

"Looking for you," he told her.

"That's swell," she said. "Come on."

She led him outside to her car and took him to her home which the studio had thoughtfully provided and carefully staffed to make sure that no inquiring reporters dropped in to appraise the Hungarian accent.

"Yes," Mr. Hoskins went on, after they were seated in her drawing room, "I came out here to find you. You see, I had trench mouth, and I was afraid I had given it to you before I left New York."

"Oh, is that all you came for?" cried Miss Fagin in disappointment. "Well, you needn't worry. I had it two or three months before you left, and my dentist cured me in a couple of weeks. I expect you got it from me, but I don't understand how. I suppose I should have warned you, but at the time it didn't seem necessary."

"It doesn't make any difference," he said, "as long as we neither one have it now. Perhaps we both licked the same envelope."

"Well, anyway, I'm glad you came," she told him, giving him the same kind of look which had so disconcerted the general, "even if it was only for the sake of hygiene. Tell me, do you like Mitzi Hunyadi?"

"Fine. You're going to be famous overnight. I had no idea you were such a good actress."

"No? And you certainly ought to know! Anyway, I'm glad you think so now. You'll stay to dinner, of course. Afterward I'll get a pencil and a notebook, and we'll pretend this is New York. I'll have someone call you on the telephone and I'll tell them you're in conference. In the meanwhile is there anything I can do for you? Then I've got to change my clothes."

◆ Mr. Hoskins looked around the room and spied a tiger-skin rug.

"Yes," he said deliberately, "there is. Before you take off your costume, would you mind going over on that rug and making eyes at me the same way you did at that British general?"

"Why, certainly," said Miss Fagin. "I'll be glad to. I made eyes at you for four years in the office, but it never got me anything."

"Just try it once more," pleaded Mr. Hoskins, "and this time you may be surprised at what it will get you."

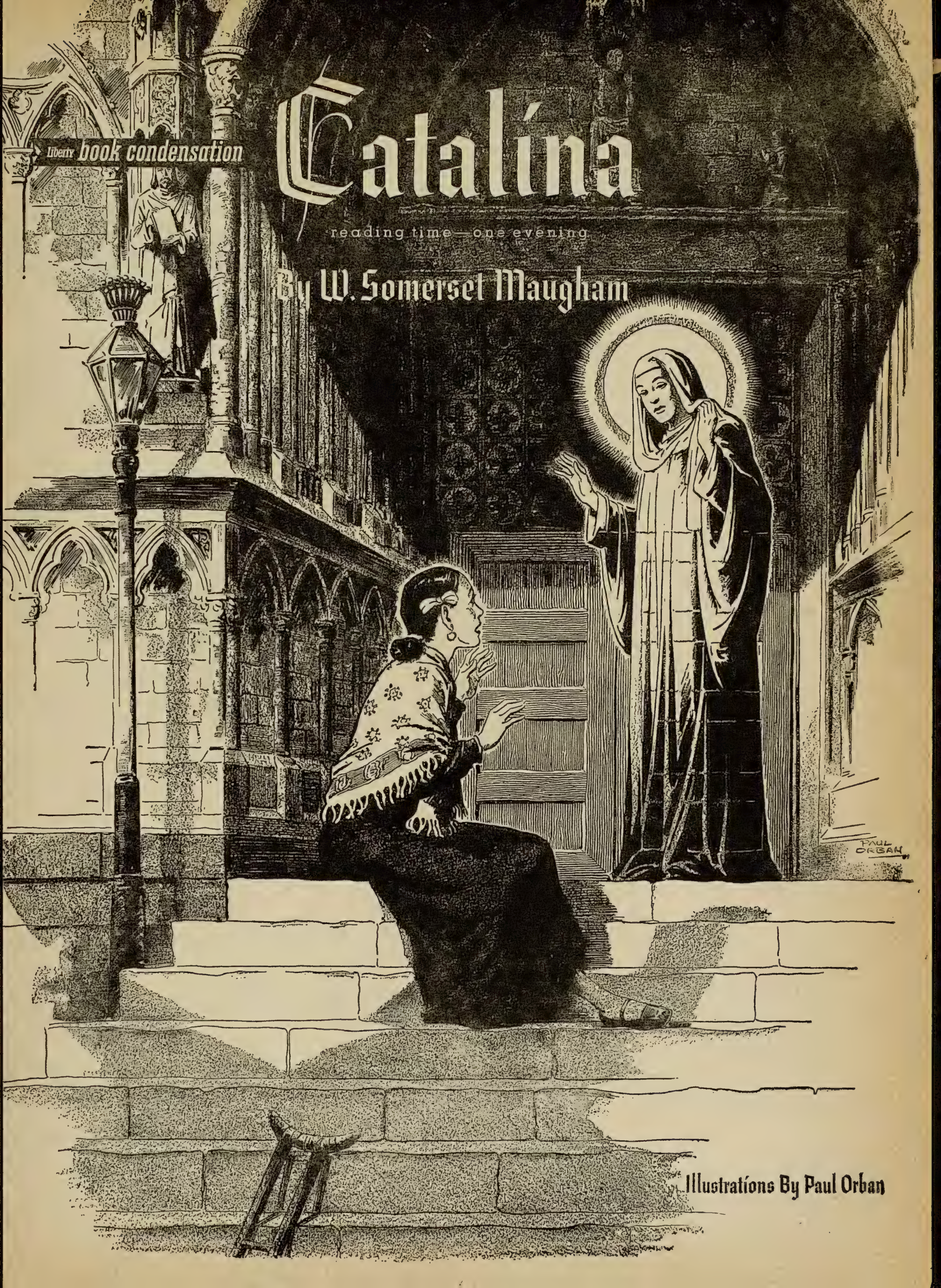
"Camera!" said Mitzi and went into her act. ◆ ◆

Liberty book condensation

Catalína

reading time—one evening

By W. Somerset Maugham



Illustrations By Paul Orban

Liberty book condensation

IT WAS a great day for the city of Castel Rodriguez. The inhabitants, wearing their best clothes, were up by dawn. On the balconies of the grim old palaces of the nobles rich draperies were spread and their banners slapped lazily against the flagpoles. It was the Feast of the Assumption, August the fifteenth, and the sun beat down from an unclouded sky. There was a feeling of excitement in the air. For on this day two eminent persons, natives of the city, were arriving after an absence of many years and great doings had been arranged in their honour. One was Friar Blasco de Valero, Bishop of Segovia, and the other his brother Don Manuel, a captain of renown in the King's armies. There was to be a *Te Deum* in the Collegiate Church, a banquet at the Town Hall, a bullfight and, when night fell, fireworks.

As the morning wore on, more and more people made their way to the Plaza Mayor. Here the procession was formed to go out and meet the distinguished visitors at a certain distance from the city. It was headed by the civil authorities, then came the dignitaries of the Church and finally a string of gentlemen of rank. The throng lined the streets to watch it pass and then composed themselves to wait until the two brothers, followed by these important personages, should enter the city, when the bells of all the churches would ring out their welcome.

In the Lady Chapel of the church attached to the Convent of the Carmelite nuns a crippled girl was praying. She prayed with passionate devotion before the image of the Blessed Virgin. When at last she rose from her knees she fixed her crutch more comfortably under her arm and hobbled out of the church. It had been cool and dark there, but when she came out into the hot breathless day the sudden glare for a moment blinded her. She stood and looked down at the empty square. The shutters of the houses round it were closed to keep out the heat. It was very silent. She glanced at her own home, a small house of two storeys wedged between its neighbours, and sighed despondently. Her mother and her uncle Domingo, who lived with them, had gone with all the rest and would not be back till after the bullfight.

She felt very lonely and very unhappy. She had not the heart to go home, so she sat down at the top of the steps that led from the church door to the plaza and put down her crutch. Then suddenly she was overcome with grief and with an abrupt gesture fell back on the stone platform and, burying her face in her arms, sobbed as though her heart would break. The movement had given the crutch a push, the steps were narrow and steep, and it clattered down to the bottom of them. That was the last misfortune. She wept disconsolately.

Suddenly she heard a voice.

"Why do you weep, child?"

She looked up, startled, for she had heard no one approach. She saw a woman standing behind her and it looked as though she had come out of the church, but she had just done that herself and there had been no one there. The woman wore a long blue cloak that came down to her feet, and now she pushed back the hood that had covered her head. She was fairly tall for a Spanish woman and she was young, for there were no lines under her dark eyes, and her skin was smooth and soft. Her hair was very simply done with a parting in the middle and tied in a loose knot on the nape of her neck. She had small delicate features and a kindly look. There was in her air a sort of homeliness and at the same time a dignity that was somehow intimidating.

◆

"Dry your tears, child, and tell me your name."

"Catalina."

"Why do you sit here alone and cry when all the world has gone forth to see the reception of the Bishop and his brother?"

"I am a cripple. I cannot walk far, señora. And what have I to do with all those people who are well and happy?"

The lady stood behind her and Catalina had had to turn around to speak to her.

"Where have you come from, señora? I did not see you in the church."

The lady smiled, and it was a smile of such sweetness that the bitterness seemed to fade from the girl's heart.

"I saw you, child, praying."

"I was praying as I have prayed night and day since my infirmity fell upon me to the Blessed Virgin to free me of it."

"And do you think she has the power to do that?"

"If so she wills."

There was something so benign and so friendly in the lady's manner that Catalina felt impelled to tell her sad story. It had happened when they were bringing in the young bulls for the bullfight on Easter Day and everyone in the town had collected to see them being driven in under safe conduct of the oxen. Suddenly one of the bulls escaped and charged down a side street. Catalina, running as fast as her legs would carry her, slipped and fell just as the beast was reaching her. She screamed and fainted. When she came to, they told her that the bull in his mad charge had trampled over her. In a day or two she complained that she could not move her leg. The doctors examined it and found it was paralysed; they bled her and purged her and gave her draughts of nauseous medicine, but nothing helped.

◆

"But you still have the use of your hands," said the lady.

"Thanks be to God, for otherwise we should starve. I cry because when I lost the use of my leg I lost the love of my lover."

"He could not have loved you very much if he abandoned you when you were stricken."

"He loved me with all his heart and I loved him better than my soul. But we are poor people, señora. He is Diego Martinez, the son of the tailor, and he follows his father's trade. We were to be married when he was finished with his apprenticeship, but a poor man cannot afford to marry a wife who cannot struggle with the other women at the market place or run up and down stairs to do all the things that need to be done in a house. And men are but men. A man does not want a wife on crutches, and now Pedro Alvarez has offered him his daughter Francisca. She is as ugly as sin, but Pedro Alvarez is rich, so how can he refuse?"

All the bells began to ring.

"They have entered the city, the Bishop and his brother the captain," said Catalina. "How is it that you are here when you might be watching them pass, señora?"

"I did not care to go."

"You do not live in the city, señora?"

"No."

Catalina was puzzled and under her eyelashes looked at her more closely. She could hardly be a Moor, for her complexion was not dark enough, but it was quite possible that she was one of the New Christians, that is to say one of those Jews who had accepted baptism rather

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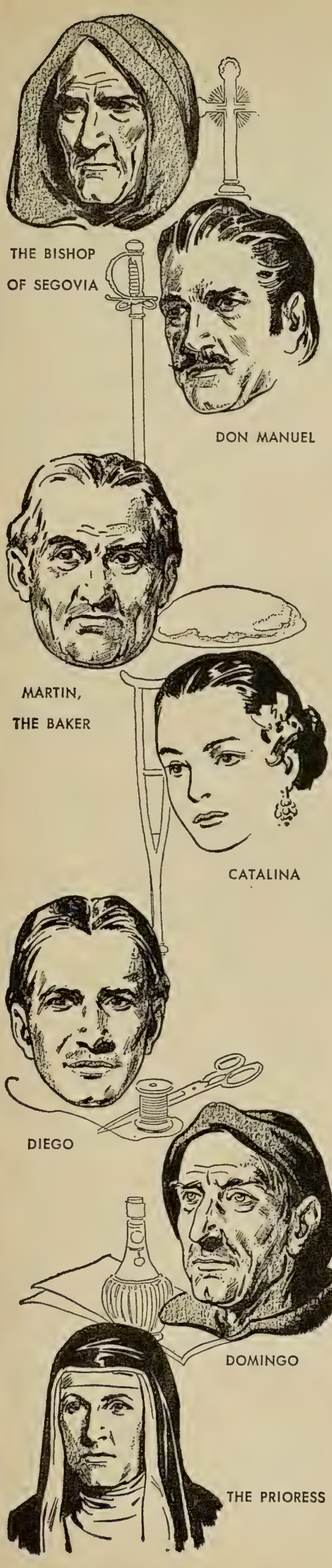


than be expelled from the country, but who, as everyone knew, still in secret practiced Jewish rites. The Inquisition was vigilant and, whether they were baptised Moors or New Christians, it was unsafe to have any communication with them; you could never know when they would fall into the hands of the Holy Office and under torture incriminate the innocent. Catalina thought it better to get away.

"It is time for me to go home, señora," she said, and then, with the politeness that was natural to her, added: "So if you will excuse me I will leave you."

But the lady paid no attention to her remark.

"Would you like to recover the use of your legs, child, so that you can walk and run as though you had never had anything the matter with you?" she asked.

Catalina went white. That question revealed the truth. She was no New Christian, the lady, she was a Moor, for it was well known that the Moors, Christian only in name, were in league with the devil and by magic arts could do evil things of all kinds.

"I would give all I have in the world, and that is nothing, to be free of my infirmity, but even to regain the love of my Diego I would do nothing to imperil my immortal soul, for that is an offence to our Holy Church."

Still looking at the lady, she crossed herself as she spoke.

"Then I will tell you how you may be cured. The son of Juan Suarez de Valero who has best served God has it in his power to heal you. He will lay his hands upon you and in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, bid you throw away your crutch and walk. You will throw down your crutch and you will walk."

◆ And then Catalina's eyes nearly started out of her head and her mouth dropped open, for where the lady had been there was nothing.

"It was the Blessed Virgin!" she cried.

She was so excited that she felt she must tell somebody at once, and without thinking she slithered down the stairs on her backside, helping herself with her hands, till she got her crutch. Then she hobbled back to her house. Discovering she was hungry, she got herself a bit of bread and some olives and drank a glass of wine. It made her drowsy, and in a little while she was asleep.

Catalina was a very beautiful girl. She was sixteen, tall for her age, with breasts already well developed, very small hands and feet, and before she was crippled walked with a sinuous grace that charmed all beholders. She had eyes that were large and dark, shining with the glow of youth, black hair naturally curling and so long that she could sit on it, a brown soft skin, cheeks of a warm rose and a red moist mouth; and when she smiled or laughed, which before her accident she did often, she showed very white even small teeth. Her full name was Maria de los Dolores Catalina Orta y Perez. Her father, Pedro Orta, had sailed for the Americas to make his fortune soon after she was born and since then no news had been heard of him. His wife, Maria Perez by birth, still hoped that one day he would return with a coffer full of gold. She was a pious woman and every morning at Mass said a prayer for his safety. She grew angry with her brother Domingo when he said that if Pedro was not long since dead he was living with a native woman, or perhaps two or three, and had no intention of coming back to a wife who had by now lost her youth and beauty.

◆ Domingo Perez had been destined to the priesthood, and at the seminary of Alcalá de Henares, whither his father sent him, took minor orders and received the tonsure. One of his fellow pupils was Blasco Suarez de Valero, the Bishop of Segovia, whose arrival in the city that day the inhabitants were celebrating. Domingo was a bad boy. He got into trouble at the seminary and before he was twenty he ran away and joined a troupe of strolling players. With them he wandered about the country for two years and then suddenly turned up at his father's house.

He professed repentance for his sins. He told his father that if he would give him enough money to keep him from starving he would go to a university and study law. His father let himself be persuaded. Domingo went to Salamanca and stayed there for eight years, but he pursued his studies in a very desultory fashion. The period he had spent as a strolling player had inspired him with the desire to write plays, and every hour he could spare from his amusements he devoted to this occupation. He had considerable facility, and a knack for stringing rhymes together that finally led to his undoing. The rector of the university, by some ordinance he had passed, had aroused the anger of the students, and when a set of indecent and scurrilous verses at his expense was found on a tavern table it was hailed with delight. In a very short time copies were passed from hand to hand. Kind friends brought the verses to the attention of the rector and at the same time told him who had written them. Brought up for trial, Domingo admitted his guilt and professed repentance; he was then sentenced to be exiled, so he went soldiering in Italy. He was forty when he returned to his birthplace, penniless.

His father and mother were dead and his only kin were his sister, Maria, abandoned by her husband, and his niece Catalina, then a pretty child of nine. Maria supported herself and her daughter by doing the difficult and skilful needlework in gold and silver thread for the Church. Wanting the protection of a man in the house, she offered Domingo a home. When this story opens he had been living with her for seven years. He earned money by writing letters for the illiterate, sermons for priests, and affidavits for suitors before the law. The little family would thus have not been so badly off if Domingo had been able to break himself of his bad habits of drinking and gambling. He also spent good money on books, chiefly volumes of verse and plays, for on his return from Italy he had taken once more to writing for the stage, though he never succeeded in getting anything produced.

◆

He grew very fond of Catalina. He took her education upon himself and taught her to read and write. He taught her the Articles of Religion and attended her first communion with all the pride of a father; but for the rest he confined his teaching to reading verse to her and, when she was old enough to appreciate them, the plays of the dramatists who were just then getting themselves so much talked about in Spain. Above all he admired Lope de Vega. He and Catalina used to play the scenes they most admired. All this ceased when Catalina was trampled by a bull.

Catalina slept for some hours and was awakened at last by the sound of her mother bustling about in the kitchen. She seized her crutch and hobbled in.

"Mother, the Blessed Virgin has appeared to me. She spoke to me." Then she related the extraordinary thing that had happened to her.

"The son of Don Juan de Valero who has served God best is the Bishop," she said when she finished. "Uncle Domingo knew him when they were both young. He can take me to him."

Maria was frightened.

"Say nothing to anybody," she told Catalina, "not even to Uncle Domingo. I will talk to him after supper and he will decide what had better be done. Now in heaven's name clean the carrots or we shall have no soup to eat."

◆

Don Juan Suarez de Valero was an Old Christian. But his ancestry was his only wealth. He owned a few poor acres a mile from the city near a hamlet called Valero, and he and his immediate forebears used the hamlet's name as part of their own. He was very poor, and his marriage with the daughter of a gentleman of Castel Rodriguez brought him little to enlarge his circumstances. Doña Violante bore her lord a child every year for ten years, but of these, only three, all sons, survived to adolescence. They were named respectively Blasco, Manuel and Martin.

Blasco, the eldest, from his infancy showed signs of unusual intelligence and fortunately of piety as well, and so was sent at a suitable age to the seminary of Alcalá de Henares and in due course attended the university. He took his degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Theology at so early an age that it was evident he could look forward to high distinction in the secular clergy. But on a sudden he announced his intention of entering the monastic order of the Dominicans. Besides a fine presence and great learning he had a voice both powerful and melodious, and a fiery eloquence. He was sent here and there to preach. His reputation grew to great heights and after some years, being then seven and thirty years of age, he was made Inquisitor of the Holy Office in Valencia.

When he was appointed to the bishopric of Segovia he accepted this new dignity only after spending a whole night on his knees wrestling with the Lord, and left Valencia amid the lamentation of great and small.

Manuel, the second son of Don Juan de Valero, was several years younger than his brother. He grew into a handsome stalwart young man with great strength of body and an uncommonly good opinion of himself. Though poor, Don Juan de Valero was highly respected, and it chanced that one of the nobles of the city was distantly related to the great Duke of Alva; and so one fine day, with a letter of recommendation in his pocket, young Manuel rode off to seek his fortune. The great man was taken with the gallant bearing of the youth and took him in his suite. Manuel acquitted himself bravely in the war with Portugal, and later, in the looting, picked up a good many valuable objects which he promptly converted into ready money. For twenty years he fought with distinction to regain the Northern Provinces for the King of Spain. He was wounded several times, the last time so severely that only his strong constitution enabled him to survive. His wound gave him a reasonable excuse to leave the King's service, and he determined to go home and marry into a family of the old aristocracy of his native town, and then go to Madrid where he could use his energy and gifts for intrigue to achieve his inordinate ambition. He was forty years old, a fine figure of a man, with bold black eyes, a handsome moustache, an air of insolent virility and an agile tongue.

◆

Martin, the youngest of the three brothers, was a sad disappointment to Don Juan. At twenty-three Martin married, and married beneath him. True, his bride was an Old Christian, but her father was a baker. Some years passed, and Consuelo had children, and then still another blow befell Don Juan. The baker died and Martin informed his parents that he proposed to move into the city and run the shop himself. He put forward the ridiculous argument that there was nothing more disgraceful in baking bread than in ploughing a barren field or pressing olives.

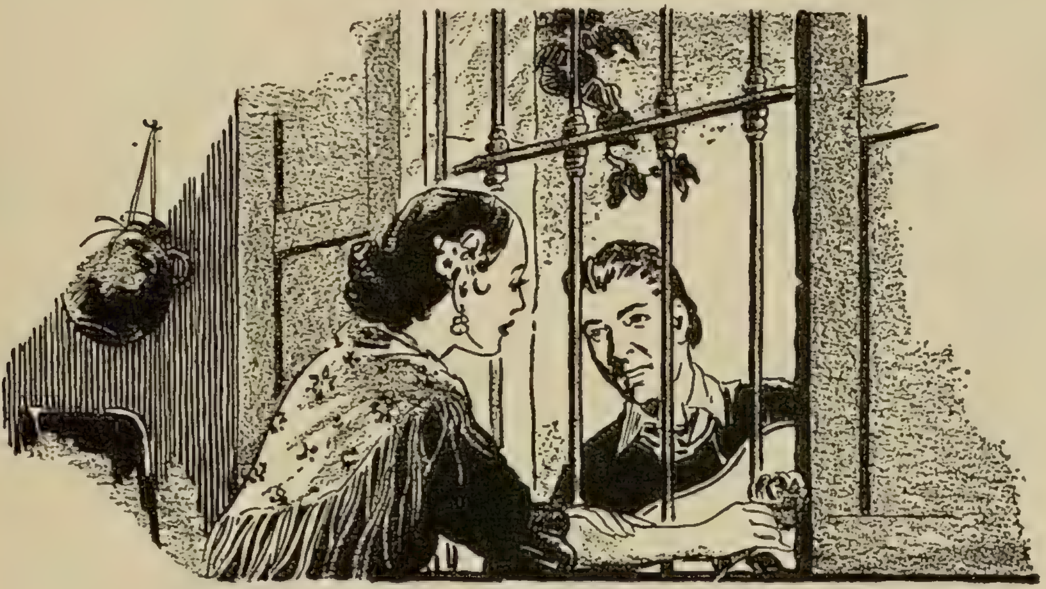
Martin installed his family over the shop. He got up long before dawn to bake the bread and then rode out to the farm and worked there till dusk. He prospered. He never let a day pass without going to see his parents. He was now a hale and hearty man, thirty-four years of age, somewhat corpulent, for he liked good food and good wine, with an open red face and a cheerful, happy look.

Friar Blasco had never in the twenty years he had been away sent any money to help his parents, for everything he had went in charity;

while Don Manuel never sent them anything, since it never occurred to him that anyone could make better use of his money than he could himself. They were thus in their old age entirely dependent on Martin. But their fondest thoughts went to the two sons who had brought honour and glory to their ancient name.

◆

The occasion of the coming of Don Juan's two sons was also the celebration of their parents' golden wedding. The two brothers arranged to meet at a town some twenty miles from the city and make their solemn entry together. It was of course impossible to house them and their suite in Martin's tumble-down grange, and it was arranged that the Bishop should be lodged in the Dominican convent, while the steward of the Duke of Castel Rodriguez, his master being in Madrid, offered Don Manuel an apartment in the ducal palace.



It is unnecessary to repeat the sweet, foolish things they said.

The great day arrived. The Bishop in his Dominican habit, on a mule, rode side by side with his brother on a charger. Don Manuel wore a magnificent suit of armour inlaid with gold. Having greeted the important personages who had come to meet them on the road and listened to some eloquent speeches, the Bishop asked for his father and mother. They had been hanging back modestly, but now came forward. Doña Violante was about to kneel and kiss the episcopal ring, but the Bishop, to the admiration of the onlookers, prevented her and, taking her in his arms, kissed her on both cheeks. He kissed his father and then, while the old people turned to their second son, he asked for Martin.

"El panadero," someone called. "The baker."

Martin then made his way through the crowd with his wife and children. They were all in their best clothes, and the jolly red-faced corpulent man looked well enough. The Bishop greeted him affectionately, Don Manuel with a certain condescension. In their letters to him Don Juan and Doña Violante had never dared to inform him that Martin had become a tradesman.

The cavalcade made an imposing entry into the city. The streets were crowded and there was a great shouting and clapping of hands as they passed through on their way to the Collegiate Church where a *Te Deum* was to be sung. The service was followed by a banquet. When it was over, Martin went to fetch his mother, who had gone with his wife and the children to the baker's house. When he returned he found his brother Blasco alone with his father, but he had only just got into the room with Doña Violante when Don Manuel strode in. His brows were knit, his eyes black with anger.

"Brother," he said, addressing the Bishop, "do you know that this Martin, son of a gentleman of ancient lineage, is a pastry-cook?"

Don Juan and his wife started, but the Bishop merely smiled.

"Not a pastry-cook, brother. A baker. I have known it for years. He has taken good care of our parents in their old age. I cannot blame him for taking a step which was forced upon him by circumstances."

"I am a soldier, brother, and I put my honour before my life. This has ruined my plans."

Don Manuel now turned sternly on his younger brother. "Give me one reason why you demeaned yourself by becoming a baker."

"Hunger."

The word seemed to crash to the floor like a pile of masonry. Don Manuel smothered an exclamation of angry disgust. A faint smile trembled on the Bishop's lips. All his Christian charity was insufficient to overcome his feeling that Don Manuel was a coarse, brutal and domineering fellow. Fortunately this family reunion was interrupted by persons who came in to tell them it was time to go to the bullfight.

When it was over, the people of the city wandered back to their homes, and Domingo Perez eventually found his way back to his sister's house.

◆

After supper, for the second time Catalina told her story. Domingo had but to look at her to be certain that she firmly believed every word she said. He was silent for a while. Catalina was self-willed, and he was afraid. She had no notion of the risks she was incurring.

"Our Holy Church does not regard with indulgence individuals who claim to have communications with Heaven. Promise me that you will say nothing till we have had time to reflect."

There was so great a dismay, so deep an anxiety, in Domingo's expression that Catalina yielded.

Now it happened that the next day was a Friday and Maria went to confession. She had had the same confessor, Father Vergara, for many years. She told him Catalina's strange story and Father Vergara felt bound to report it to his prior. The prior after some thought came to the conclusion that the Bishop should be informed of it, so he sent a novice to ask if it would be convenient for him to see him and Father Vergara. The novice came back to say that the Bishop would be pleased to receive them.

The friar repeated Catalina's story. As an afterthought he added that Domingo Perez, her uncle, had exacted a promise from her to keep the episode a secret until the matter had been well considered. By the time he had come to an end the Bishop's face had assumed an expression of severity.

"I know this Domingo," he said at length. "He is a man of evil life and one with whom no one who values his salvation should associate. But he acted with prudence. You are the child's confessor, Father?" The friar bowed. "You would be well advised to refuse to give her absolution until she promises that she will not speak of this affair to anybody. And now if you will permit me I will go on with my work," he said.

The two friars sidled away.

"Why is he vexed?" asked Father Vergara.

"We have offended his humility. He does not know how great a saint he is and does not look upon himself as worthy to perform a miracle."

Soon the convent was buzzing with excitement. Some praised the Bishop's modesty, others regretted that he had not taken occasion to do something that would so greatly add to his renown and to the credit of the order.

Two or three days after Maria's confession she had occasion to go to the convent and after doing her errand began to chat with the nun who was her most intimate friend. Swearing her to secrecy, she told her of her daughter's strange experience. Within twenty-four hours it reached the ears of the lady prioress.

◆ Beatriz Henriquez y Braganza, in religion Beatriz de San Domingo, was the only daughter of the Duke of Castel Rodriguez, a grandee of Spain and Knight of the Golden Fleece. He had great wealth and great power. He had founded the convent at Castel Rodriguez at which his daughter was prioress.

Doña Beatriz called one of her nuns and told her to fetch the girl. In a little while the nun came back and informed her that Catalina was dutifully prepared to obey the Reverend Mother's order, but her confessor had forbidden her to repeat her story to anyone.

For some time Doña Beatriz pondered. Then she sat down at the table and wrote a letter in which she begged the Bishop of Segovia to do her the honour of coming to see her since she wished to speak to him on a matter that seemed to have some importance. He came the following afternoon, accompanied by the two friars who were his secretaries, and was received by the subprioress in the parlour.

"The Reverend Mother desires to speak with your lordship in private," she said humbly.

The Bishop hesitated for an instant and then slightly inclined his head in assent. Doña Beatriz rose to meet him and, falling to her knees, kissed the episcopal ring, then she motioned him to a chair and sat down.

"I was hoping your lordship would see fit to visit this convent," she said, "but since you did not come, I ventured to invite you."

"My teacher of theology at Salamanca told me to have as little to do with women as possible, to be polite to them, but to keep them at a distance."

It was nearly thirty years since she had last seen him, and these were the first words they had ever exchanged. His temples were hollow, his cheeks sunken; his face, deeply lined, bore the mark of suffering; only the eyes, luminous with a strange light, darkly passionate, remained to remind her of the young seminarist she had known when she was sixteen—known and loved madly. She had known that her love for young Blasco de Valero could result in nothing. True, he was only in minor orders and could be released from them, but her father would never consent to such a misalliance; her own pride would not allow her to bestow her hand in marriage on the gutter nobleman that he was. And Blasco? He loved her, she had been certain, but he loved God more. It was when she heard that he had entered a monastic order that she had her inspiration; she knew as if he had told her in so many words that in flying the world he was seeking to escape her, and it gave her a strange joy, a sense of triumphant power. She would do the same thing. In that life, widely separated, they would in some mystical way be united.

◆ All this passed through the mind of the grim severe Prioress in a flash. As she looked at the man now, so worn and haggard, with that look of suffering on his face, she wondered if he remembered.

During their conversation the Bishop kept his eyes on the floor.

"Wouldn't it be well if you saw this girl?" Doña Beatriz concluded. "With your discernment, you should be able to tell very quickly if she is an impostor."

For a long time the Bishop was sunk in thought. His face was very sad. At last he sighed.

"What must be done had better be done quickly. Let her come tomorrow, madam, and I will be here." He rose from his seat and as he bowed to take his leave of the Prioress there was the shadow of a smile, but so rueful, on his lips. "A sorrowful night awaits me, Your Reverence."

She knelt down once more and kissed his ring.

◆ The Bishop took a long look at the crippled girl. He had a tender heart and was always moved by distress, want or infirmity. She was trembling a little.

"Do not be frightened, child," he said gently. "You have nothing to fear if you tell the truth."

She told him the simple little story of her life, told it so naturally, with such an ingenuous air, that the Bishop was touched. He could not think this was a girl who had invented something to make herself important.

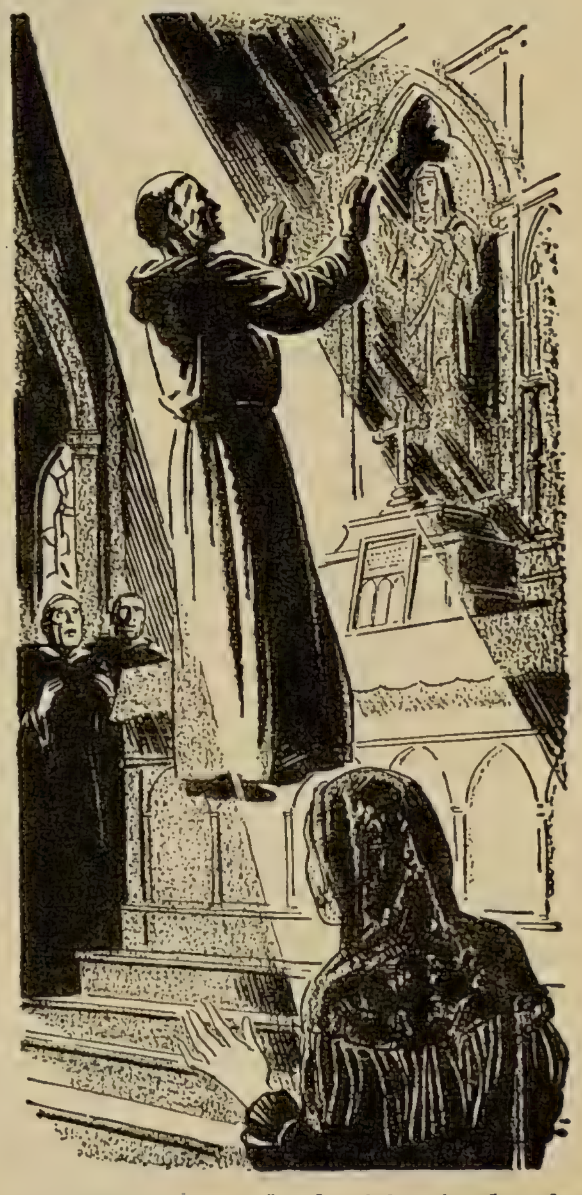
"Now tell me in your own words the story you told your mother," he said, fixing her with searching eyes.

She hesitated and he told her that he had authority to override the confessor's prohibition.

Then she repeated it exactly as she had told it to her mother. The Bishop was shaken, but at the same time distracted with indecision. If he refused to do what it looked as if he had been bidden to do because he was afraid, might he not be committing a grave sin of omission?

"A sign," he muttered to himself. "A sign."

He took a step or two forwards till he came to the altar above which in a great cloak of blue velvet all



The Bishop was slowly rising in the air.

stitched in gold stood an image of the Mother of God. He knelt and prayed for guidance. At last, with a sad sigh, he rose to his feet and stood, his arms outstretched in supplication.

Suddenly Catalina gave a little startled cry. The two friars who had accompanied the Bishop had withdrawn out of sight but not out of earshot, and when they heard this they scuttled forth as quickly as rabbits into their burrow; but what they saw rooted them to the ground. Don Blasco de Valero, Bishop of Segovia, was slowly rising into the air, as slowly as oil slides down a plate ever so slightly inclined; the Bishop rose till he was face to face with the image over the altar and for a moment was suspended in the air for all the world like a falcon motionless on its outstretched wings. One of the friars, fearing he would fall, made as if to start forward, but the other, Father Antonio, restrained him; and the Bishop, slowly, slowly, descended till his feet once more touched the marble floor. He walked down the three steps that led from the altar, and like a man in a daze groped his way out of the chapel. The two friars, in case he stumbled, kept close to him. Catalina was forgotten. They emerged from the church. The Bishop paused at the top of the steps, the steps on which Catalina had sat when Our Lady appeared to her.

"Have the girl told that she shall hear from me."

When they arrived at the Dominican convent he stopped and turned to them.

"Under pain of excommunication you will not utter a single word of what you have seen today."

But it had not occurred to him to bind Catalina to secrecy. In a couple of hours the whole city knew. In the end the Bishop allowed himself to be convinced that it was the will of God that he should do what the Blessed Virgin required of him. He sent Father Antonio to inform Doña Beatriz of his decision.

◆ Domingo did not get home till late that evening, but he was no sooner in the house than Catalina in a tremor of agitation told him her thrilling news. He looked at her with a sternness she had never seen in him before.

"Tell me exactly what it was that the Blessed Virgin said to you."

She repeated the story.

"And then the lady said: 'The son of Don Juan de Valero who has best served God has it in his power to cure you.' "

"But that is not what you told your mother. You told her that Blasco de Valero had it in his power to cure you."

"It's the same thing. The Bishop is a saint, all the world knows that."

"You fool!" he shouted.

"It's you who are the fool," she answered hotly. She told him then what she had seen.

He looked at her now with a twinkle in his eyes.

"I didn't believe it before, but I believe it now, not for what you saw this morning, but for the words the Blessed Virgin spoke to you. There is a meaning in them that convinces me."

◆ Domingo went to the Dominican convent and insisted that he must see the Bishop on a matter of grave importance. In a few minutes Father Antonio came to the door. Domingo besought him to let him see the Bishop, since he had a communication to impart to him that it was vital to him to hear.

"Drunkard," said Father Antonio scornfully.

"Tell him that for the love he bears him Domingo Perez sends him this message: 'The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.' "

"Hijo de puta!" cried Father Antonio, in a rage that this dissolute scamp should quote Scripture.

He slammed to the shutter of the judas. Domingo turned away. He was in a black mood. Habit bent his steps to the tavern and he went in.

Next morning when, as Domingo would have put it in a poem, Aurora rubbed the sleep from her eyes with rosy fingers and Phoebus harnessed to his golden chariot the swift coursers of the sun, or in plain language at break of day, Catalina was waiting in the Lady Chapel of the Carmelite church. Maria Perez and Domingo had accompanied her, but had been refused admittance. Doña Beatriz received the Bishop at the church door with her nuns. The Bishop, with his two attendants, went into the sacristy and donned the sacred vestments. They walked slowly to the Lady Chapel. The nuns were on their knees. Catalina, supporting herself on her crutch, knelt at the foot of the altar steps. The Bishop said Mass. He administered Holy Communion to Catalina. After the benediction and the reading of the last Gospel he knelt at the altar and prayed in silence. Then he rose to his feet and with his great tragic eyes upon Catalina walked down the steps. He placed his hand on her head.

"I, the unworthy instrument of the Most High, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost bid you throw aside your crutch and walk."

He had begun tremulously, in so low a voice that the nuns could hardly hear, but he spoke the last words loud and clear in a tone of command. Catalina, her face pale with emotion, her eyes shining, raised herself to her feet, cast the crutch aside, took a step forward and with a cry of anguish crashed to the floor. The miracle had failed.

Immediately there arose a hubbub among the nuns. The Prioress stepped forward. She gave Catalina a glance and then her eyes met the Bishop's. For a little while they gazed intently at one another. Then the Bishop walked out of the chapel, the two friars at his heels.

When the Bishop entered his cell he sank onto the hard wooden stool and stared at the stone floor. Slow, painful tears trickled down his sunken cheeks. Father Antonio's heart was filled with compassion to see his master plunged in what looked very like despair. He whispered to his companion, who forthwith left the cell and in a few minutes returned with a bowl of soup. Father Antonio knelt and fed the broken man as though he were a sick child. When the Bishop had eaten, Father Antonio put aside the bowl and, still on his knees, ventured to take his hand.

"Do not take it so hard, señor. The girl was deceived by demons."

"No, the fault was mine. I asked for a sign and the sign was given me. In my vainglory I thought myself not unfit to do what is vouchsafed to the saints whom God has chosen for His own. I am a sinner and I am justly punished for my presumption."

◆ Next day, towards evening a lay brother came to tell him that his brother Don Manuel was in the parlour and desired to see him. With a sigh the Bishop told the lay brother to show him in. Since their arrival at Castel Rodriguez he had seen no more of him than courtesy required.

He came in, grandly dressed. His face bore a look of self-satisfaction and there was malice and cunning in his bold bright eyes.

"What made you think that you were the chosen instrument to cure that girl of her disability?"

The Bishop hesitated. It was his inclination to refuse an answer, but, mortifying himself before the gross coarse man, he gave it.

"I received an assurance that what the girl said was true and, though I knew myself unworthy, I felt bound to act upon it."

"You made a mistake, brother. You should have examined her more carefully. The Blessed Virgin told her that the son of Don Juan de Valero who had best served God had the power to cure her. Why did you jump to the conclusion that you were meant?"

The Bishop paled. "She said to me that Our Lady had told her that it was I. Who told you that those were the words?"

Don Manuel chortled at what seemed to him an excellent joke.

"It appears that the girl has an uncle called Domingo Perez. We used to know him when we were little. He goes to a tavern frequented by my servants, and he scraped an acquaintance with them, doubtless in the hope of drinking wine at their expense. Last night he was in his cups. As was natural, they were all talking of the events of the morning, for your fiasco, brother, is become the common talk of the city. Domingo told them that he had expected nothing else and sought to warn you, but was refused admission to the convent. He repeated then the exact words which Our Blessed Lady had spoken, as his niece had reported them to him."

◆

The Bishop was confounded. Don Manuel continued and now there was in his eyes a look of mockery.

"Did it not occur to you, brother, that it was I that was meant? You have burnt a few dozen heretics at the stake, and I, to the glory of God, have killed the damned heretics by the thousand. I have besieged thriving towns and when they surrendered put all their inhabitants, men, women and children, to the sword."

The Bishop shuddered.

"Heaven knows, I am conscious of my unworthiness," he said at last. "You must not forget that there is still the possibility that the girl Catalina Perez was deceived."

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating. If I fail it will be clear that the girl is a witch and should be handed over to the Inquisition for trial and punishment."

Upon this Don Manuel withdrew. The Bishop knelt down before the black cross on the wall and silently prayed. Then he called a lay brother and bade him fetch the man Domingo Perez.

◆

For a while the two men stared silently at one another

"It is a long time since we last met, Domingo."

"Our paths have gone very different ways. I should have thought your lordship had long forgotten the existence of so poor and worthless a creature as Domingo Perez."

"I am ashamed that you should address me with such ceremony. It is many years since I have heard a friend call me Blasco."

Domingo gave him his charming, disarming smile.

"The great have no friends, dear Blasco. It is the price they must pay for their greatness."

"Let us for an hour forget this poor greatness of mine and talk with one another like the old and intimate comrades we once were. You were wrong in thinking I had ever forgotten you, we were too close to one another for that. You were born to excel, and but for your restless temper you might by now be a shining ornament of our Holy Church."

"I lacked the vocation, my good Blasco. Life allured me. I have lived. And even now when age is creeping upon me I have no regrets for the years I have wasted, for I too have slept on Parnassus."

"Do you not fear the wrath to come? The wages of sin is death."

"Is it the Bishop of Segovia who asks me that question or my old and dear friend Blasco de Valero?"

"So long as you say nothing to offend the Faith, say what you will."

"Then this must be my answer: We know that the attributes of God are infinite and it has always seemed strange to me that men have never given Him credit for common sense. God made me a man with the passions of a man and did He give them to me only that I should suppress them? He gave me my adventurous spirit and my love of life. I have a humble hope that when I am face to face with my Maker He will condone my imperfections and I shall find mercy in His sight."

The Bishop looked sorely troubled.

"I did not send for you today in order to urge you to mend your ways," he said at last. "Do you believe that the Blessed Virgin did in fact appear to your niece?"

"I was in two minds until yesterday when she told me the exact words Our Lady had used. Then I was convinced. That is why I sought to see you. You see, I, a sinner, can afford to surrender to the blind impulses of my heart. I wished to save you from a humiliation which I knew would be very bitter to you. The moment the girl repeated to me the Blessed Virgin's exact words I knew who was designated to cure her of her infirmity."

The Bishop gave Domingo an anxious glance. "My brother Martin?"

"The baker."

Beads of sweat stood on the Bishop's brow.

"It is impossible. He is no doubt a worthy man, but of the earth, earthy."

"Why is it impossible? Because he has no learning? The ways of God are inscrutable and it may well be that in His eyes, by his industrious, honest life, his loving-kindness, his innocent gaiety, Martin the baker has served Him better than you or your brother Manuel."

The Bishop passed his hand heavily across his forehead. His face was anguished. "My brother Manuel is determined to attempt what I failed to do."

"At all costs you must prevent him."

"I have no authority to do so."

"If your brother should persist in his folly he will seek to avenge himself for his discomfiture on that wretched girl. The people will side with him. They will have no mercy."

"I swear to you that I will give my life if need be to save the child from harm."

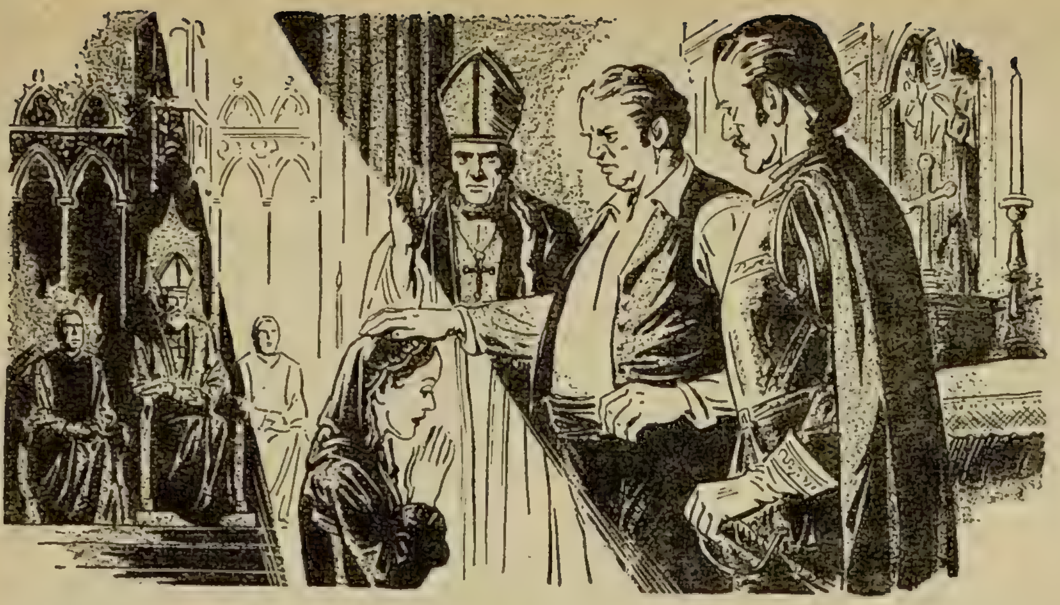
Domingo rose to his feet.

"I thank you with all my heart. Farewell, my dear."

On a sudden impulse he took the Bishop in his arms and kissed him on both cheeks. The sinner pressed the saint to his heart and was quickly gone.

◆

Next day, heavy at heart with his two faithful secretaries, the Bishop walked at the head of the friars from the convent to the church. It was thronged to the doors. He took his seat in a great chair beside and a little in front of the high altar. Presently Don Manuel came forward with a company of gentlemen and seated himself in a chair that had been placed for him on the other side of the altar. In the nave the crowd were talking aloud and calling to one another as though they were at a bullfight.



A shudder shook Martin. He laid a trembling hand on the girl's head.

The Bishop surveyed them with indignation.

At the foot of the steps, supporting herself with a crutch, knelt Catalina.

At last the moment had arrived which the crowd had been impatiently awaiting. A strange sound came from them, as though their expectation itself was audible.

Don Manuel rose to his feet and strode to the kneeling girl. The scene, the moment, had invested him with an unaccustomed dignity. He was confident in his power. He laid his hand on the girl's head and in a loud voice, as though he were giving his regiment the order to charge, he repeated the words he had been given to say.

"In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost I command thee, Catalina Perez, to rise to thy feet, cast away thy useless crutch and walk."

The girl, spellbound by the awfulness of the occasion, frightened, staggered to her feet and dropped the crutch. She took a step forward and with a cry of terror fell headlong. Once more the miracle had failed.

◆

Then a great uproar arose and it was as though a sudden madness had seized the crowd.

"A witch. A witch!" they cried. "Burn her." They surged towards the sanctuary.

The Bishop sprang to his feet and strode down the sanctuary till he came face to face with the frenzied mob. He raised his arms above his head and his dark eyes blazed.

"Back, back!" he cried in a voice of thunder. "Who are you to desecrate this holy place?" They shrank back. "Kneel, kneel and pray that you may be forgiven for the insult that you have offered to the house of God."

Silence fell except for the hysterical sobbing of a woman here and there.

"Listen to what I say. The Blessed Virgin told this girl that the son of Don Juan de Valero who had best served God had the power by God's grace to cure her of her infirmity. In our sinful pride and vanity I who speak to you and Don Manuel my brother had the temerity to think that one or the other of us was thus designated. We have been bitterly punished for our presumption. But Don Juan has still another son."

"El panadero!" they cried. "The baker."

"Silence!" cried the Bishop. He swept that multitude with a glance of withering contempt. "Are the familiars of the Holy Office here? Let them stand forth," he said.

There were eight in Castel Rodriguez. There was a moment's pause while they left their seats and took up positions behind the Bishop.

"It is not for you, a generation of vipers, to lay hands on this wretched girl. If she is deceived or possessed of a devil it is for the Holy Office to take cognizance of it. If she fails in the test the familiars are here to deliver her to the Tribunal. But the test is not complete. Where is Martin de Valero? Let him come forward."

The crowd parted and Martin was urged forward to the sanctuary steps. The day was hot and pearls of sweat stood on his forehead. His plump good-humoured countenance was heavy with consternation. As though drawn by a force he could not withstand, he ascended the sanctuary steps.

"Brother, brother, what is it that you are doing to me?" he cried. "How can I do what you could not?"

"Be silent."

The Bishop had not even a remote notion that the baker could work a miracle, and he had only thought of him on the spur of the moment to save Catalina from the fury of the rabble.

"There is no respect of persons with God. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted and the haughty shall be abased. Bring forward the girl."

Catalina was lying where she had fallen, her face hidden in her arms, and sobs shook her thin little body. No one had paid more attention to her than if she were a dead dog by the roadside. Two familiars raised her to her feet and brought her face to face with the Bishop.

"Oh, my lord, my lord, have pity on me!" she cried. "Not again, I beseech you. It can come to nothing. Let me go home to my mother."

"Kneel," he ordered. "Kneel."

With a despairing sob the child sank to her knees.

"Lay your hand on her head," he bade his brother.

"I cannot. I will not. I am afraid."

"Under pain of excommunication I command you to do as I tell you," said the Bishop harshly.

A shudder shook the unfortunate Martin. He timidly laid a trembling hand on the girl's head. It was not even clean.

"Now say the words that you heard your brother Manuel say."

"I cannot remember them."

"Then I will say them and you shall say them after me."

Martin said them after him in a tone that was barely audible. Catalina, as she was bidden, scrambled to her feet and with a despairing gesture flung the crutch away from her. For an instant she wavered. She did not fall. She stood. Then, with a cry and a sob, forgetting the place and the occasion, she turned and ran down the sanctuary steps.

"Mother, Mother."

The dense throng for a moment was too stunned to move. They gasped in amazement; then such a hullabaloo arose as never was heard.

"The miracle. The miracle."

◆

Night fell. Maria Perez, Domingo and Catalina supped. Mother and daughter had talked and talked till they had nothing more to say. Domingo urged them to go to bed, but Catalina said she was too excited to sleep. Suddenly she sprang to her feet.

"There he is!" she cried. They heard the twanging of a guitar in the street. "Diego. Mother, I can go to the *reja*, can't I?"

The *reja* was the grille that secured the window from the intrusion not so much of thieves as of too enterprising swains.

"He abandoned you when you were crippled," Maria Perez said. "And now that you are a celebrity and the whole city is talking about you he comes running back."

"Let her go," said Domingo. "She loves him and that is the end of it. I daresay he is no more worthless than any other young man of this degenerate day."

Catalina was left alone. She went to the window and against the darkness of the night saw a figure which made her heart beat.

"Diego."

"Catalina."

Thus at this late stage is introduced into this story a hero.

"Heart of my soul," he said, "I adore you."

"My love, my precious love."

But it is unnecessary to repeat the sweet, foolish things they said to one another. They said what lovers say.

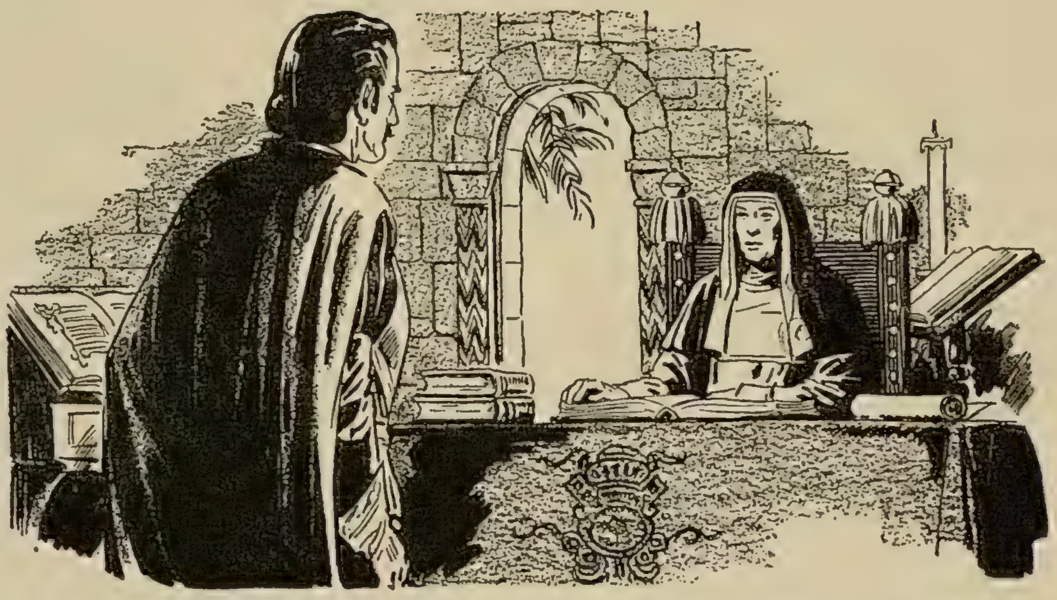
◆ The miracle had given Catalina a distinction which Diego's father realized would be useful in his business. By consenting to the marriage of which he had formerly disapproved he decided that he could make his son happy and do a good stroke of business into the bargain. Thus the last impediment to the happiness of the fond lovers was removed.

They little knew that while, with the iron grille between, they continued by night, with little variety but to their mutual satisfaction, to talk in the silly way above described, a great lady in her oratory, only a stone's throw away, was contriving a scheme that very much concerned them.

Doña Beatriz carried in her heart a deadly hatred for a certain nun of Avila, Teresa de Cepeda by name. This nun, known in religion as Mother Teresa of Jesus, but by the Prioress never referred to but as La Cepeda, had founded convent after convent of Discalced Carmelites, as they were called, since they wore sandals with rope soles; and after her death, some years before the time with which this narrative deals, it was borne in upon Doña Beatriz that sooner or later La Cepeda would be canonized. If the Prioress could do nothing to prevent the upstart order from receiving an honour for which she could see no justification, she could do something to restore the balance by providing her own order with a candidate for canonization. Catalina having received so signal a mark of divine favour, it seemed only proper that she should devote the rest of her life to the service of God. Doña Beatriz had heard that she fancied herself in love with a young man of the city, but she brushed this aside.

She had Catalina brought to her. She gravely but mildly suggested that in common gratitude for the grace she had received Catalina should make a retreat in the convent. Catalina was taken aback.

"Oh, Reverend Mother," she cried, "I couldn't do that. We've been separated so long, it would break my Diego's heart to be parted from me now. He says that he only lives for the hour when we talk to one another at my window. I should pine away if I didn't see him then."



Doña Beatriz looked him up and down as though he were a lackey.

"I would not press you, child, to do anything that you do not wish. The only thing I would ask you is to consult your confessor on the matter."

She then dismissed her with the present of a rosary of amber beads.

It was no surprise to the Prioress when two or three days later she was informed that Catalina was in the parlour and had come to beg permission to make a retreat. She sent for her, made her welcome, kissed her and put her in charge of the mistress of novices.

Though Doña Beatriz had never told anyone of her plan, it was not long before it was generally known among the nuns and the lady boarders to what end tended the privileges Catalina enjoyed and the notice the awe-inspiring Mother Superior took of her. An effusive nun one day told her how much they all loved her and how much they wished that she would remain with them for good.

That evening Catalina went and sat at the feet of the Prioress.

"I want to go home," she sobbed. "The nuns, the ladies, they seem to take it as a matter of course that I shall enter the convent. I don't want to."

The Prioress was seized with a sudden anger because those foolish women in their zeal had betrayed her, but she did not let a trace of it appear on her grave face.

"It is a matter for you to decide for yourself according to the dictates of your conscience and I am far from wishing to influence you."

"Then may I go home, Reverend Mother?"

"You are free to go whenever you like. I ask you as a favour out of respect to your confessor to stay for the period he appointed."

Catalina could do nothing but say that she would be happy to stay. The Prioress dismissed her with a fond kiss. Once more alone in her oratory, she sat down and wrote a letter to Don Blasco de Valero, Bishop of Segovia, in which she begged him to come and see her on a matter on which she needed his advice.

He sent back a message to say that he would come next day, and with a punctuality unusual in Spain presented himself at the appointed hour. The Prioress went straight to the point.

"I desired to see your lordship about the girl Catalina Perez. She is in every way fitted to the religious life, and I should have no hesitation, notwithstanding her modest extraction, in admitting her to this house."

Without looking up the Bishop slightly inclined his head, but whether in approval or merely to indicate that he heard was not evident. The Prioress raised her eyebrows.

"The girl is young, she does not know her own mind and perhaps it is only natural that she should be attracted by the vain delights of the world. It has occurred to me that it would be a worthy act on your lordship's part if you would see her and point out to her, as no one can do better than you, where her duty and at the same time her happiness lies."

"If she has no vocation for a religious life it can be no duty of mine to urge her to enter upon it."

Doña Beatriz was none too pleased with the Bishop's brevity. She was more accustomed to an effusive volubility in those with whom she troubled to converse. There was some sharpness in her tone when she went on.

"It is a very small return I ask for the favour and protection my family has always afforded your order. Will you refuse my request to see this girl?"

◆

The Bishop was puzzled by her insistence. What was it that the prior of the convent in which he was staying had told him about her? She had fought tooth and nail to prevent Mother Teresa of Jesus from founding a convent at Castel Rodriguez. He looked now for the first time at the Prioress and his dark tragic eyes sought to pierce her innermost thoughts.

"Am I right in supposing that your reason for desiring the girl Catalina Perez to enter your order is that you have conceived the foolish notion that the notoriety which now surrounds her may in some way counterbalance the fame the Discalced Carmelites would acquire if their founder were beatified?"

If the Prioress was startled by the Bishop's discernment no sign of it appeared on her face.

"We have had enough saints in our order to maintain our equanimity if His Holiness should confer such an honour on a mischievous rebel."

"You have not answered my question, madam."

Doña Beatriz was too proud to lie. "I could only look upon it as a good if this girl were enabled to undo the harm caused by Teresa de Cepeda. If you will not help me to do what I am assured is a meritorious service to a poor soul struggling with uncertainty, I must help myself."

The Bishop looked at her long and sternly.

"It is my duty to remind Your Reverence that to compel anyone against his will to enter a religious institution is a crime which incurs a special censure and excommunication *latae sententiae.*"

The Prioress went deathly white, not with fear at the dreadful threat, but with anger that he should venture to make it, and yet it sent a cold shiver down her spine. For the first time in her life she felt the domination of the male. She maintained an offended silence. The Bishop rose to his feet and with the customary expressions of courtesy took his leave.

◆

The Prioress allowed a few days to elapse. She then asked the steward of her estates to make an opportunity to see Don Manuel de Valero, the soldier, and in the course of a casual conversation tell him that she would be glad to receive a man of whom she had heard so much good.

He was ushered into the oratory and left alone with the great lady. Doña Beatriz looked him up and down for all the world as though he were a lackey she was about to engage. Altogether the first impression Don Manuel made on her was not unfavourable.

"Will you not do me the favour of taking a seat?"

"You are very good, madam."

"I have lived a retired life, but nevertheless from time to time a scrap of news reaches me from the world outside these walls. I have heard, for instance, that apart from performing a filial duty your object in visiting your native place was to choose a wife from among the noble families of this city."

"I will not deny it, madam."

"I have a widowed niece, the Marquesa de Caranera, whose husband has unfortunately left her very ill provided for. She is at present living in this house. I had hoped that she would be moved to adopt the life of a religious so that when at last I lay down my arduous functions she might succeed me. But she lacks the vocation, so I have come to the conclusion that a suitable marriage should be arranged for her."

Don Manuel was suddenly alert. "I had not envisaged marrying a widow, but rather a young girl whom I could form to my liking."

"The Marquesa is twenty-four, which is a very suitable age for a man of your years," the Prioress replied somewhat sharply. "She is not lacking in beauty, and since she had a son by her husband, she is certainly not barren."

◆

Don Manuel had been thinking quickly. With the influence of that powerful family behind him there was no knowing to what heights he might rise. To make such a marriage would be to triumph over the fools who had held him up to ridicule.

"I don't know how to show Your Reverence my gratitude for the honour you propose to confer on me."

"I will tell you," she said coolly. "I desire to enlist your influence on behalf of a young man of this city with the Archduke Albert. I should have no need to do this but for the unfortunate fact that my brother has had a violent quarrel with him and so cannot help me. I have been given to understand that you stand high in the Archduke's favour. It would be to this young man's advantage to enter the Archduke's service. He is strong and brave and would make a good soldier."

"And what, madam, is the young man's name?"

"Diego Martinez."

"The tailor's son? Then, madam, what you ask is impossible. The soldiers serving in the Archduke's army are gentlemen, and I could not put such an affront on His Highness as to make the request you wish."

"I have foreseen that difficulty. I can get letters of nobility given to him."

His glance was shrewd. "He is the lover of the girl Catalina Perez?"

"He has been pestering the unhappy girl with his attentions."

"And is that why you wish him sent to the Low Countries? Would it not be more expeditious and less costly to dispose of the young man on the spot? It would be very easy to have his throat cut one dark night."

"It would be a mortal sin, sir, and I am shocked that you should venture to propose it."

"Then what would you have me do, madam?"

"Order a suit of clothes. Talk to the tailor about his son. Let him send the young man to you on some pretext and put it before him. Let me see you again when you have something to tell me. I trust you to be discreet and tactful."

◆

Don Manuel went again to see the Prioress.

"The father is in full accord with our plan," he told her. "The boy said he wanted to marry his sweetheart, but in a year, when she'd had a baby, he wouldn't be unwilling to go to the Low Countries."

"You've bungled the whole thing, you fool!" she cried.

Don Manuel flushed angrily.

"Is it my fault if the young idiot is head over ears in love with this girl?"

The Prioress gave him a look of cold disdain.

"You have failed, Don Manuel, and I can see no profit in our further communication."

He was acute enough to see that with these words she intimated to him that he need no longer entertain the hope of marrying the widowed marchioness.

"Your Reverence is easily discouraged. The boy can be seized one night, taken to a seaport and put on a ship. Youth is fickle. Once in the Low Countries, he will forget his love and in a short while thank his stars that he has been saved from an unfortunate entanglement."

The Prioress sighed.

"I do not like the plan, but it is evident that the young are foolish and it is often better that their fate should be decided by older and wiser heads."

"I can promise Your Reverence that no harm shall come to him."

"When does your brother leave the city, Don Manuel?" she asked.

The question surprised him.

"I do not know, Your Reverence, but if it interests you I can inquire."

"I do not wish anything to be done till after his departure."

"It shall be as you will, madam. The boy shall be taken on the night of the day on which my brother leaves the city."

"That will do very well, Don Manuel," she said graciously.

She gave him her hand to kiss as he took his leave.

But though her reason assured her that she was acting for the best and was fully justified, Doña Beatriz could not dispel the peculiar uneasiness that possessed her.

◆

Towards evening she was told that Catalina was asking to be allowed to see her. She was shown into the oratory. The Prioress noticed with dismay that she was violently agitated.

"What is it, my child?" she asked.

Sobbing, the girl told her that a principal gentleman of the city had offered to send Diego to the wars, with the promise of giving him an estate and getting the title of Don for him. He had refused for love of her and in consequence had had a violent quarrel with his father. His father had said at last that if he did not accept these magnificent offers and go peacefully he should go by force, and added that he withdrew his consent to his marriage with Catalina.

"Oh, Mother, Reverend Mother, have pity on us. Save him. Don't let them take him away. I cannot live without him. I am only a poor and ignorant girl. I have nothing in the world but my love. I love him with all my heart."

"He's nobody. He's only a boy like another," said Doña Beatriz hoarsely.

"Ah, madam, you say that because you have never known the pain and bliss of love. I want to feel his arms around me, I want to feel the warmth of his mouth on mine. I want him to take me as a lover takes the woman he loves. I want to suckle his child at my breast."

◆

The Prioress shrank back. Suddenly her face was contorted in a grimace, a grimace of unendurable agony, and tears poured down her cheeks. Catalina gave a cry of dismay. She took the thin hands in hers and kissed them.

"Madam, why do you cry? What have I done?"

Doña Beatriz withdrew her hands. "I am a wicked and unhappy woman," she moaned.

Memories of long ago crowded upon her. How could she break that poor little heart as hers had been broken? She bent down and kissed the girl's red mouth.

"Have no fear, my sweet," she said. "You shall marry your lover."

Catalina gave a cry of joy and broke into voluble expressions of gratitude, but the Prioress harshly told her to be quiet. The situation was delicate and she had to think. In a few hours they were to spirit Diego away.

"You must leave the city, you and this boy, and you must go tonight. Fetch Domingo, your uncle."

When Catalina in a few minutes came back with her uncle, the Prioress sent her down to wait in her own cell so that she could speak to him alone. She told him such of the facts of the situation as she thought it needful for him to know, gave him certain instructions and with them a short note which she had already written for her steward. She then told him to get hold of Diego, let him know what had been decided and see that he followed the directions given him. Having dismissed him, she called Catalina.

"You will spend the evening with me, my child. At midnight I will let you out by a door in the city wall and you will find Domingo with a horse which I have ordered my steward to let him have. He will ride with you to a spot which has been arranged, and there Diego will be waiting. He will change places with Domingo and you are to ride south till you come to Seville. I will give you a letter to friends I have there and they will find suitable work for you and him."

"Oh, madam," cried Catalina, wild with excitement, "how can I show my gratitude?"

"I will tell you," answered the Prioress with some severity. "Ride fast and on no account linger on the way. You have desperate men to deal with and it may be they will pursue you. Chastity is a woman's crown, and you must preserve it till the Church has blessed your union. You will seek out a priest at the first village you come to after daybreak and ask him to join you to Diego in holy matrimony. Do you see what I have here?"

Catalina looked and saw a plain gold ring.

"It is the ring I had destined for your consecration on your profession. It will be your wedding ring."

◆

They prayed together. The hours passed slowly. At last the convent clock struck and it was midnight.

"It is time," said Doña Beatriz. She took a small bag from a drawer in her writing table. "Here are some gold pieces. Put the bag in a place where you will not lose it."

Catalina, modestly turning her back, pulled up her skirt, put the bag inside her stocking, and tied the strings around her leg.

The Prioress lit a lantern and told the girl to follow her. They walked softly through silent passages till they came out into the garden. Domingo, on horseback, was waiting in the shadow of the wall, for the moon was shining and the night was bright.

"Now go," said the Prioress.

"God bless you, my child, and remember me in your prayers, for I am a sinful woman and I need them."

◆ The countryside was deserted and they might have been riding in a world of which they were the only inhabitants. They passed a sleeping hamlet and beyond it was a clump of trees. As they came to it a figure detached itself from their shadow. Catalina slipped off the horse and flung herself into Diego's arms. Domingo dismounted.

"Come, come," he said. "You'll have plenty of time for that sort of thing later. Get on the horse, both of you, and be off. There's food and a bottle of wine in the saddlebags." He kissed them, saw them start.

The lovers rode for an hour and Catalina talked her head off. Diego was so happy he was prepared to laugh at everything she said.

"I could ride like this to the end of the world."

"I'm hungry," he answered. "Let us stop here and see what is in those saddlebags."

They were passing a wood and he reined in the horse. He passed his leg over the horse's head and, slipping to the ground, lifted Catalina off the horse's back. She was in his arms and he kissed her on the eyes and on the mouth. He took hold of the bridle and with his arm still about Catalina's waist made for the wood. But at that moment a sharp shower of rain fell upon them.

"It's not raining over there," Diego said, pointing a little way down the other side of the road. "Let's run."

But they had no sooner reached the spot he indicated than the rain suddenly began to fall there too.

"It's only a local shower," he said. "If we ride quickly we shall get out of it."

He mounted, helped Catalina up, and, clapping his spurs to the horse's flanks, galloped down the road. But no sooner had they got away from the wood than the rain stopped as abruptly as it had begun. After perhaps half an hour, they came to a little copse.

"This'll do," said Diego, reining in the horse.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a heavy drop of rain fell on his nose.

"The devil's in it," he said.

He put his foot back in the stirrup and rode on. The rain stopped.

◆ They went on through the night. At last the sun rose. They were on the top of a little hill and, looking down, saw in the gray dimness of dawn a small village. They entered the village and suddenly the horse stopped dead. Nothing Diego could do got him to move a step forward. Catalina began to laugh and Diego turned on her furiously. "What is there to laugh at?"

"Don't be cross with me, my love. Don't you see where we are?"

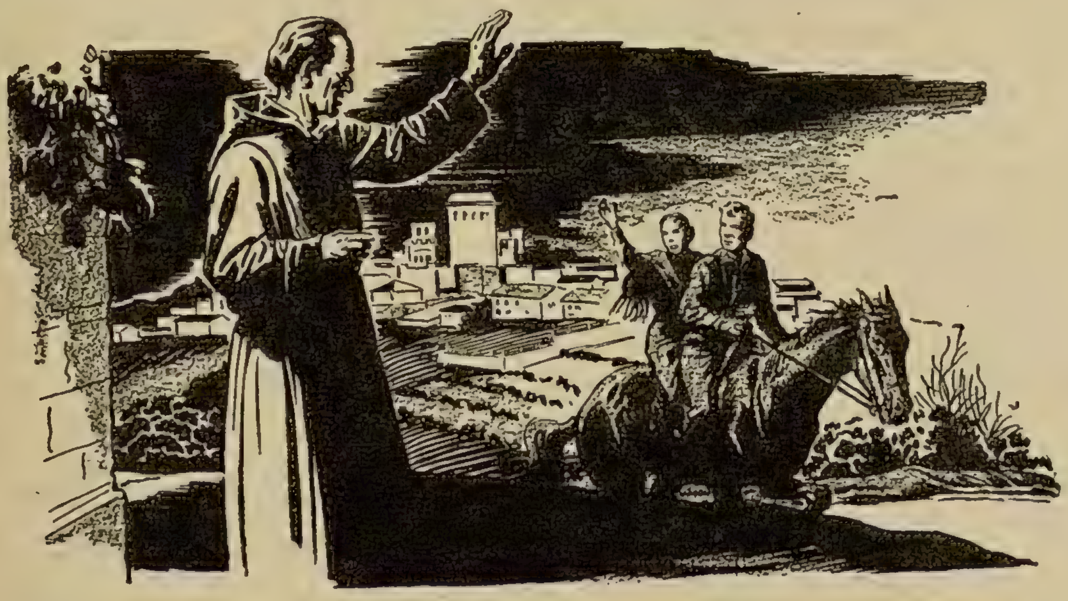
Diego, frowning, looked and noticed that the horse had stopped in front of the church.

"What of it?"

"The Prioress made me promise that we'd get married in the first church we came to. That's it."

"There's plenty of time for that later," he said.

Once more he dug his spurs savagely into the poor brute's flanks and as he did so the horse humped his back, kicked up his hind legs, and before they knew what happened the two riders were flying through the air. Fortunately they fell on a pile of hay and so were not hurt. Just as this happened, the priest, who had been saying his Mass, came out of the church and, seeing the accident, hurried up.


The lovers rode for an hour and Catalina talked her head off.

"It's providential that this should have occurred at the church door," said Catalina, "for we were looking for a priest to marry us."

"But who are you?" he asked doubtfully. "Why do you want to be married in a strange place and in such a hurry?"

"Have pity on two young lovers, Father. We have run away from Castel Rodriguez because this youth, to whom I was betrothed, was being forced by his avaricious parents to marry a woman without a tooth in her head and only one eye."

Catalina put a gold piece in the priest's hand and firmly closed it.

"Follow me," said the priest and re-entered the church. "Pepe," he called in a loud voice.

A man, broom in hand, came out from a chapel beside the sanctuary.

"I am going to marry these young people. Ah, but there must be two witnesses," the priest said.

"I will be the second witness."

◆ It was a woman who spoke. They all turned round and saw her walking towards them. She wore a blue cloak and her head was covered with a great white scarf the ends of which were thrown over her shoulders. The priest looked at her with surprise. And Catalina gave a start. The stranger, a faint smile in her eyes, put her finger to her lips enjoining Catalina to silence. The ceremony was speedily performed.

The Spanish have always been a courteous people and the priest, with the gold piece safely tucked away, was no exception.

"If, gentleman and ladies, you will do me the honour of coming to my humble dwelling next door I shall be happy to offer you such refreshment as my poverty can provide."

He showed them into a small bare room which served as refectory, parlour and study. He set about the food greedily and Diego and Catalina followed his example. The strange lady touched nothing.

"Pray eat, madam," he said. "It is simple fare, but good, and it is the best I can offer you."

She gave the bread and wine a smile in which there was a singular sadness and shook her head. At that moment the sacristan burst into the room.

"Señor, señor," he shouted, beside himself with excitement, "they've stolen the Virgin! I went in there to sweep and the pedestal on which she stood was empty."

"You're mad or drunk, Pepe," the priest shouted, jumping to his feet.

He flung out of the house and, followed by the sacristan, Diego and Catalina, ran to the church. They scrambled up the church steps and ran to the Lady Chapel. The sacristan gave a great cry. The image of the Blessed Virgin stood in its accustomed place.

"It wasn't there a minute ago. I swear by all the saints."

When the three of them got back to the priest's house to finish their frugal repast they were surprised to find that the strange lady was nowhere to be seen.

◆

It was now time for Diego and his bride to resume their journey to Seville, and thanking the priest for his hospitality, they took leave of him. They rode for three or four miles till they came to the wood. Diego got off and lifted Catalina down. While he tied the horse to a tree she got out what the forethought either of the Prioress or Domingo had provided. Bread and cheese, sausage, a cold chicken and a bulging skin of wine. Who could want a better wedding breakfast?

When they emerged from the wood, Diego leading the horse, the sunrays flamed less fiercely. They rode for six or seven miles and then saw a ramshackle building by the roadside, evidently an inn.

"We shall be there very soon. Are you tired, sweetheart?"

"Tired?" she answered. "Why should I be tired? I'm as fresh as a lark."

They had ridden a good forty miles and since the day before she had not slept more than an hour. She was sixteen.

They reached the inn. A troupe of actors had arrived the day before to give a performance at a neighbouring castle where its lord, a grandee of Spain, was celebrating the marriage of his son and heir.

"And where, pray, is Master Alonso?" asked one of the actors when they all sat down to supper.

"He will not come," said a middle-aged woman who played duennas, wicked stepmothers and widowed queens and was also the wardrobe mistress. "He says he has no heart to eat."

"An empty stomach only makes misfortune doubly hard to bear. We shall not eat till he comes."

"Go and fetch him, Mateo," said the wardrobe mistress.

A skinny little man with a long nose and a big loose mouth got up and went out. The wardrobe mistress sighed.

"It is a sad business," she said.

"If you will not think me impertinent," said Catalina, "I should like to ask you what the trouble is."

◆

They were only too glad to tell her, for it was very much on their minds. The company belonged to Alonso Fuentes, who also wrote many of the plays they acted, and his wife Luisa was his leading woman. Early that morning she had run away with the leading man and taken with her all the cash she could lay hands on. It was a catastrophe. For Luisa Fuentes had been a great attraction and they were well aware that it was she that had brought the money into the box office. The conversation was interrupted by the appearance of the abandoned husband. He sat down morosely and a great dish of olla-podrida was set on the table.

"This is my last meal on earth, for after supper I have every intention of hanging myself," he said. "How can I give a performance without actors?"

"I could play the part of Don Ferdinand," said the skinny fellow who had gone to fetch Alonso.

"You?" cried the actor-manager scornfully. "How could you, with your horse face and your shrill voice, play the part of a gallant, audacious, headstrong and passionate prince? No, that is a part *I* could play, but who is going to take the part of the lovely Dorothea?"

"Is it possible that you are referring to *Truth with Zeal Even Heaven Can Move?"* asked Catalina, who had been following the conversation with attention.

"It is," said Alonso, not without surprise. "But how did you know?"

"It is one of my uncle's favourite plays. We used to read it together. He often said that Dorothea's speech when she indignantly rejects the dishonourable advances of Don Ferdinand is equal to anything that the great Lope de Vega has written."

"Do you know it?"

"By heart."

"Saved!" cried Alonso. "You shall play Dorothea with me tomorrow and I will play Don Ferdinand."

"How could I?" she said in a fright. "I should die. I have never acted. It is impossible."

The rest of the company joined their entreaties to those of Alonso Fuentes and in the end Catalina agreed.

Early next morning they rehearsed the play and then carriages arrived to take them to the Duke's castle. The distinguished audience were charmed by Catalina's grace, the music of her voice and the elegance of her delivery, and when the play was over the Duchess gave Catalina a gold chain, and the Duke, not to be outdone, took a ring off his finger and gave it to Diego. Alonso was richly rewarded and the company, tired but happy, returned to the inn.

Alonso turned to Catalina. "I invite you to join my troupe."

"Me?" said Catalina, astounded.

"Though you still have everything to learn, you have gifts that it would be a sin to waste. If you will place yourself in my hands I will make you the greatest actress in Spain."

"I am a married woman and my husband and I are on our way to Seville where we have the assurance of honest occupation."

Alonso Fuentes had caught the look she gave Diego and now with a smile turned to him.

"You have good looks, young fellow, and a fine presence. There is no reason why with experience you should not be able to make yourself useful in suitable parts."

"What do you think, beloved?" asked Catalina with her most charming smile.

"You will not only be helping me in my difficult situation," said Alonso, "but you will be benefiting yourselves, for you will visit with me the most famous cities of Spain."

Diego's eyes sparkled.

"I've always wanted to see the world," he smiled.

"And you shall, my sweet," said Catalina. "Master Alonso, we will gladly join your troupe."

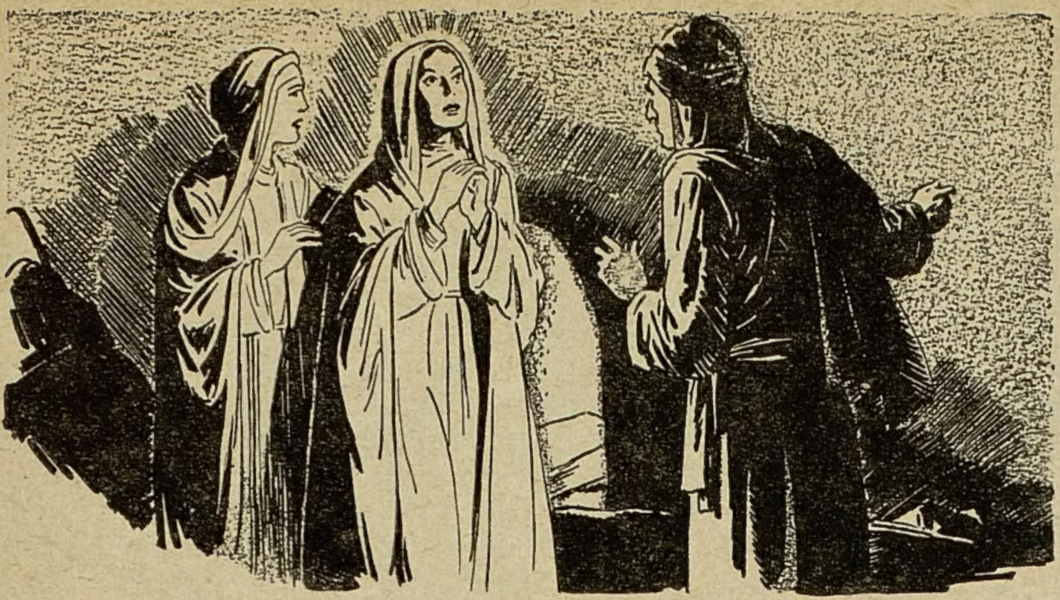
"And you shall be a great actress."

"Ole, ole!" cried the other members of the company.

Alonso called for wine and they drank to the health of their new comrades.

◆

Three happy, strenuous years passed. By then Catalina had learnt all that Alonso Fuentes could teach her, and with two young children to take care of she began to find it irksome to be constantly on the move. Her beauty and her talent had attracted the attention of in-



The priest showed them into a small room which served as refectory.

fluential persons and more than one had suggested that she and Diego should form their own company and establish themselves in Madrid.

Then, one day, Catalina conceived the bright idea of sending for Domingo Perez. He had been an actor himself, he was a playwright, and if they finally decided to go into management for themselves they might put on one or two of his plays and he would certainly be able to put them in touch with authors. They were spending Lent in Segovia, partly because it happened to be Alonso's native city, but chiefly because his company had been engaged to play a religious drama in the cathedral at Easter and it was now in rehearsal. It was Alonso's latest play and he had chosen the life of Mary Magdalen as his subject.

Domingo was pleased on his arrival at Segovia to find that success, happiness and maternity had combined to give Catalina self-confidence and dignity, but also a tender voluptuousness that was vastly alluring.

"Run to Rodrigo's and get a bottle of wine, dear," said Catalina, and Domingo smiled when he saw her dive into some recess of her petticoats and, taking out a purse, give Diego a few coins.

"There was quite a commotion in Castel Rodriguez after you disappeared," Domingo told them. "My poor child, no one had a good word to say for you any more and your wretched mother was in despair. The nuns were horrified that after all the kindness Doña Beatriz had shown you, after the great favour she was prepared to confer on you, you should have put such an affront on her. The principal persons of the city went to the convent to offer her proper expressions of sympathy, but she was evidently so upset that she refused to receive them. She did, however, consent to see Don Manuel, but what passed between them is unknown. Shortly afterwards Don Manuel left the city. I would have written to tell all this long ago if you had given me an address."

"It was impossible to do that. You see, we were moving from place to place."

"Why were you doing that?"

"I am leading woman in the celebrated company of Alonso Fuentes and Diego sings and dances and is a much better actor than Alonso will allow."

"Why didn't you tell me sooner?" cried Domingo. "I would have brought half a dozen plays with me."

They proceeded then to tell Domingo what was on their minds. He was a prudent man and when they had finished said that he was not prepared to advise them one way or the other till he had seen them act.

"Come to rehearsal tomorrow," said Catalina. "I am playing Mary Magdalen in Alonso's new play."

"I will certainly come. And are you pleased with your part?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Not altogether. It's well enough at the beginning, but it falls off in the last act. I don't appear in the last three scenes at all. I've told Alonso that as the play is about me I should be on at the end, but he says he must follow Holy Writ."

Domingo had arrived at Segovia at the beginning of Holy Week and the following Tuesday he presented himself at the episcopal palace. The Bishop rose and took Domingo in his arms and warmly embraced him.

"I thought we should never meet again, brother," he said with an affectionate cordiality that surprised Domingo. He was emaciated, his lined face was haggard, and his eyes had lost their fire. But notwithstanding these signs of decrepitude there was in his aspect something luminous, a change in his expression that Domingo was conscious of but failed to interpret. The Bishop asked him to sit.

"How long have you been here, Domingo?"

"A week."

"And you have waited all this time to see me? That was not kind."

"I did not wish to intrude on you before, but I have seen you more than once. In the processions of Holy Week and in the cathedral on Good Friday and again at Easter, and at the play."

◆

The Bishop was silent. He looked at Domingo with searching eyes.

"Speak," he said. "Speak and by the love you once bore me tell me the truth."

"What is it you want me to tell you?"

"You were certain that it was my brother Martin who was chosen to effect the cure of that poor girl. Are you certain of it still?"

"As certain as I was then."

"Then why, why was I granted the sign that dispelled my trembling hesitations?"

"You are a difficult man to speak freely to, my dear," said Domingo. "I do not want to say anything that may be an offence to you."

"Say on, say on!" cried the Bishop with something like impatience.

"Do you remember that I told you how surprising it seemed to me that among the infinite attributes that men ascribe to God they have never thought of including common sense? But there is another that has even more completely escaped their attention, and yet, if a creature may venture to judge of these things, it is of even greater value. Omniscience would be incomplete without it and compassion repellent. A sense of humour."

The Bishop gave a slight start.

"Did I shock you, brother?" Domingo asked seriously, but with a faint twinkle in his eyes. "Laughter is not the least precious of the gifts that God has granted us. It lightens our burdens in this hard world and enables us to bear many of our troubles with fortitude."

"You put things strangely, Domingo, and yet I do not know that there is anything in what you say that a good Christian need reject."

"You are changed, brother. Is it possible that in your old age you have learned tolerance?"

The Bishop looked down at the bare stone floor.

"A very strange thing has happened to me," he said at last, "and I have dared to tell no one of it."

Domingo, watching him intently, waited.

"As Bishop of the diocese I was obliged to attend the play they gave in my cathedral; someone told me it dealt with the life of St. Mary Magdalen; but I was not obliged to listen or to look. I abstracted my mind. I prayed. But my soul was weary and disquieted.

"Suddenly I was startled by a cry and I remembered where I was. I do not know what had passed before, but, listening then, I understood that the play had reached the point where Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James, bringing spices, came to the sepulchre where Joseph of Arimathaea had laid the body of Jesus, and found the stone rolled away. And they entered in and found not the body of Jesus. And as they stood there, perplexed, a traveller, a follower of Jesus, came to them and Mary Magdalen told him what she and the other Mary had seen. And then, because he knew nothing of the terrible events that had taken place, she told him of the capture, the trial and the shameful death of the Son of God. The description was so vivid, the words so well chosen, the verse so mellifluous that even if I had not wanted I should have been forced to listen."

♦ Domingo, holding his breath, leant forward eagerly.

"There was a fiery indignation in the voice of that woman who played the Magdalen when she told of the betrayal of Jesus, and a fierce anger seized the multitude in the cathedral and they shouted curses on the traitor. When she told how they had scourged Our Lord, the pain in that golden voice, the heart-rending pathos in it were such that the tears ran down my cheeks. I felt something strange was about to happen to me and I was afraid. I raised my downcast eyes and gazed at the speaker of those lovely, cruel words. She was of a beauty I have never seen on earth. And as I looked, spellbound, on a sudden a ray of light transfixed the dark night in which I had so long languished; it entered my heart and I was rapt in ecstasy. I felt myself released from the body and a stranger to the flesh. At that happy moment I tasted of the wonderful peace that passeth all understanding. I felt myself filled with all good and emptied of all evil. I cannot describe that bliss. I possessed God and in possessing Him possessed everything."

Domingo could contain himself no longer.

"Blasco, Blasco, the girl who took the part of Mary Magdalen is my niece, Catalina Perez. When she ran away from Castel Rodriguez she joined the troupe of Alonso Fuentes."

The Bishop stared at him with amazement. Then, with a sweetness Domingo had never seen on his face before, he smiled.

"Truly the ways of God are inscrutable. Through her He wounded me and through her He healed me. Blessed be the mother that bore her, and all glory to God, for when she spoke those heavenly words she was inspired by Him. I shall remember her in my grateful prayers to my dying day."

Domingo knelt down to kiss the Bishop's ring, but he raised him to his feet and kissed him on the cheek.

Domingo walked back to his lodging, a skinny elderly man with great pouches under his eyes, a reddish nose and not a dozen teeth in his head, an old reprobate in a patched cassock green with age and spotted with wine stains and the droppings of food; but he walked on air.

"The magic of art," he chuckled gaily. "Art also can work its miracles. *Et ego in Arcadia natus.*"

For it was he, the despised playwright, the dissolute scapegrace, who had written those lines that had so affected the Bishop.

♦ It had come about after this wise: Catalina had not been dissatisfied with the first two acts of the play Alonso had written for her. But she had not been a leading lady for three years for nothing, and when she discovered that she had so little to do in the last act she was incensed. When Domingo had read the play he made a suggestion to Catalina. She threw herself in his arms and kissed him.

"Uncle of my soul, you are a genius."

On the Saturday, after the first rehearsal, Catalina addressed Alonso in her most cajoling way.

"It has occurred to me that it would be wonderfully effective if in the third act I narrated the story of Our Lord's betrayal, trial, crucifixion and death. It would only need a hundred lines."

"It's out of the question," he cried impatiently. "We play tomorrow. How could I write a hundred lines and rehearse them in that time? How could you learn them?"

Catalina smiled sweetly.

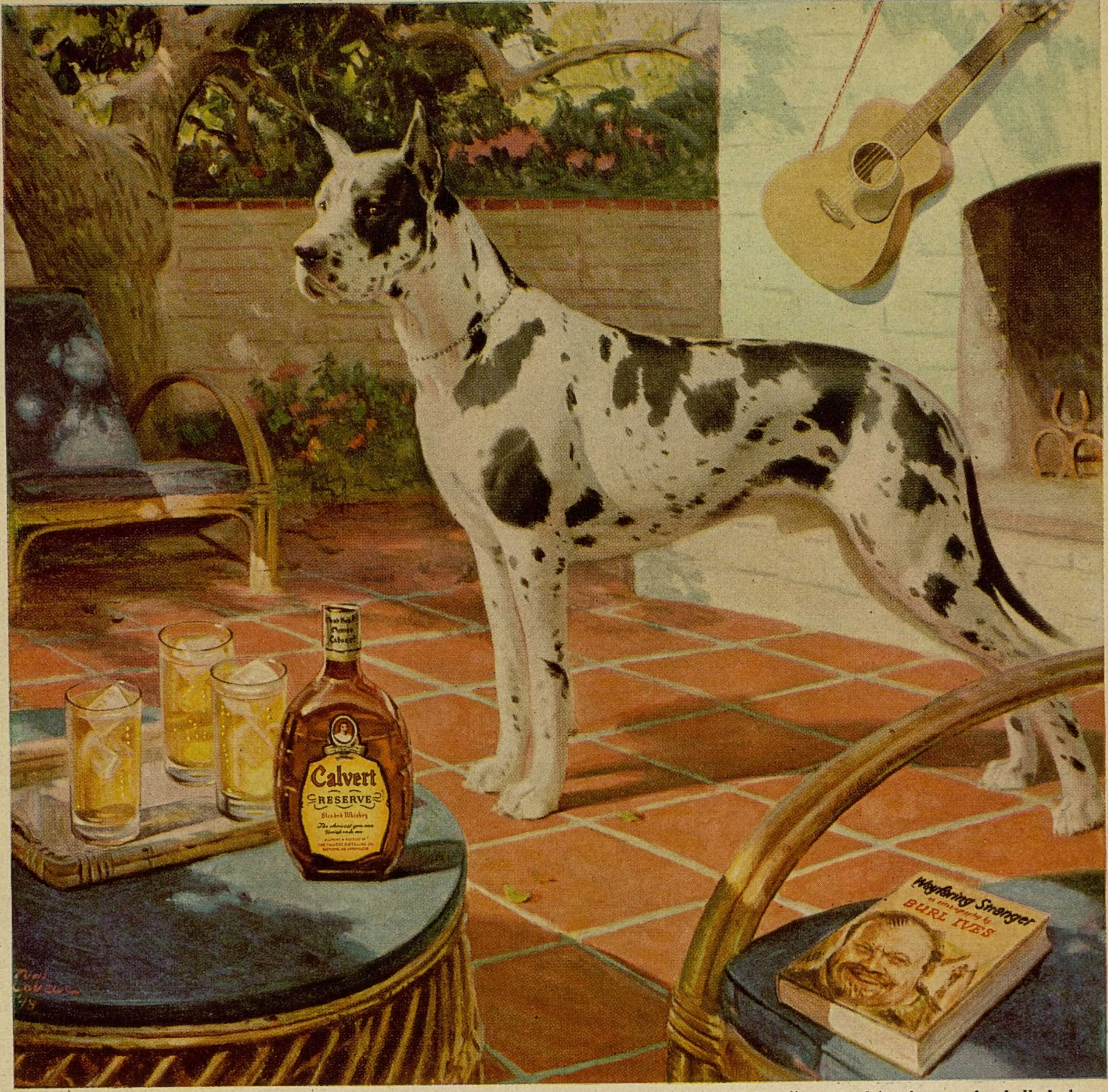
"Well, it so happens that my uncle and I have talked it over and he was inspired by the beauty of your play to write the lines which he agreed with me the scene demanded. And I have learnt them by heart."

The scene was rehearsed and played, with the effect on the Bishop of which the reader has been apprised. Many persons singled out Domingo's hundred lines for special praise, and when Diego very indiscreetly let it be known by whom in fact they had been written Alonso was deeply mortified. In retaliation he told friends that Catalina was nothing like the actress she thought she was and without him to coach her would prove to have had very little talent. This was no sooner repeated to Catalina than she severed her connection with the ungrateful manager and with her husband and her children set out for Madrid.

She still had the gold Doña Beatriz had given her, and during the three years on the road, being a thrifty young woman, she had saved money, so that, notwithstanding Diego's somewhat extravagant tastes, she could look forward to the immediate future without anxiety. They called upon the patrons who had promised their influence and money to help them to get started and, finding them prepared to fulfil their promises, were able to form a company. They were successful even beyond their hopes. Diego proved himself a good businessman and manager, so that with the years they became rich.

♦ A Dutch traveller who went to Spain in the latter part of the reign of Philip IV has left it on record that though Catalina had grown corpulent and was several times a grandmother, such was her grace, the melody of her lovely voice and the magic of her personality, that before she had been on the stage five minutes you forgot her age and figure and accepted her without question as the passionate girl of sixteen she was representing.

So, with Catalina as it began, ends this strange, almost incredible, but edifying narrative. ♦ ♦



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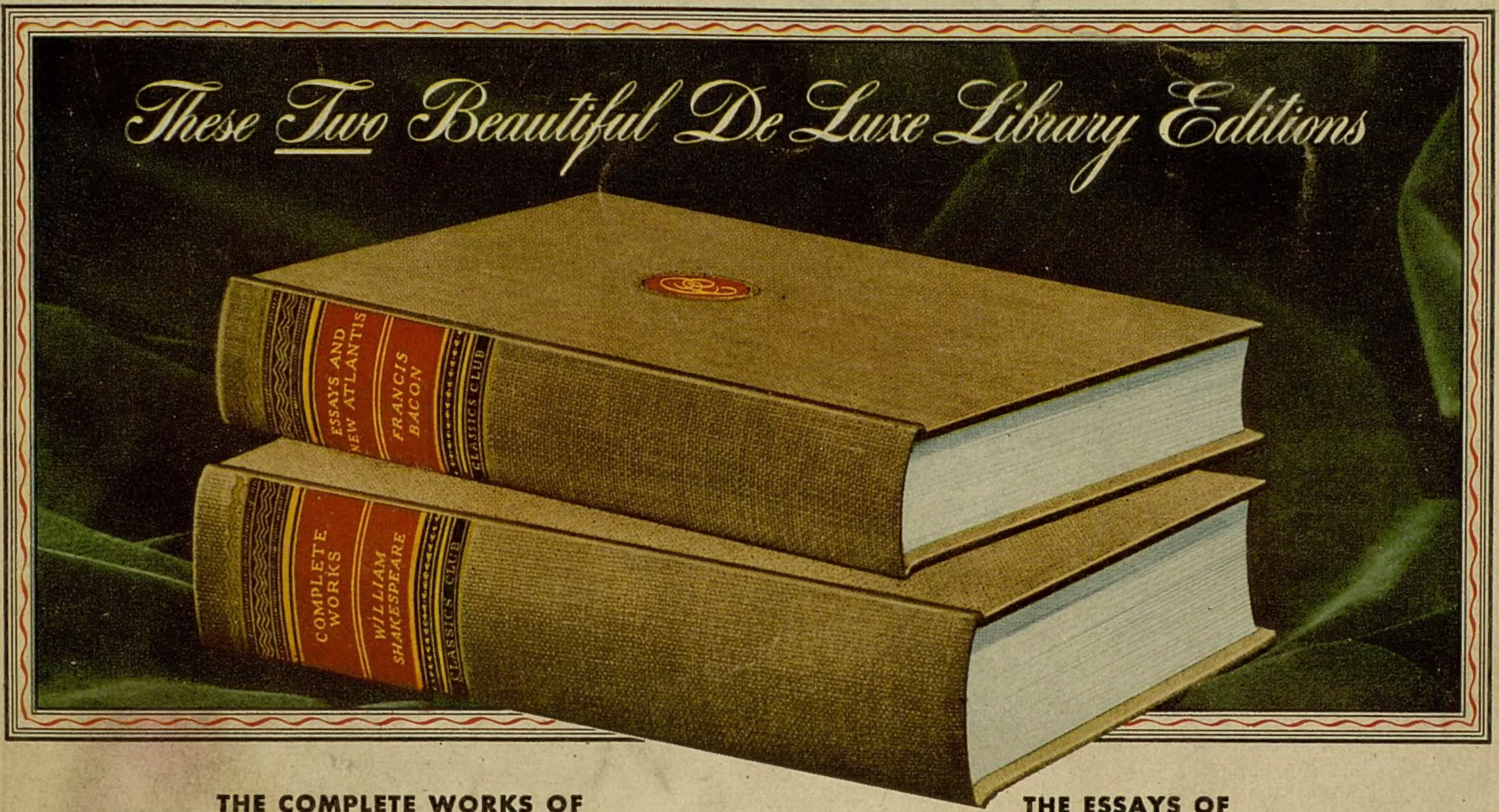

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